

IMAGES OF INSPIRATION
THE OLD TESTAMENT
IN EARLY CHRISTIAN ART

IMAGES OF INSPIRATION THE OLD TESTAMENT IN EARLY CHRISTIAN ART

EDITED BY

JOAN GOODNICK WESTENHOLZ



BIBLE LANDS MUSEUM JERUSALEM

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PREFACE

The Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem is pleased to present this publication on the occasion of opening the exhibition "IMAGES OF INSPIRATION, The Old Testament in Early Christian Art", on view in Jerusalem from January 26, 2000 through January 6, 2001. The exhibition and catalog are devoted to the centrality of the stories from the Old Testament as a source of inspiration for artists and worshippers of the early Christian period.

We welcome the new millenium year by providing this exhibition and catalog to celebrate the link between Judaism and Christianity in the hopes that it will foster a greater understanding of and respect for one another in light of our common heritage.

For the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem, this publication and the exhibition which it accompanies reflects our dedication to presenting exhibitions that enlighten our understanding of biblical history and the inherent ethical human message.

For this exhibition, "IMAGES OF INSPIRATION: The Old Testament in Early Christian Art" we have assembled choice examples of Early Christian art up to the 7th century.

Throughout history man has expressed himself through art. Art is a powerful and provocative language to convey beliefs, hopes and to reflect the history of the people. Our heritage is carved in stone, sculpted from clay and woven into textile for the perpetuity of mankind.

The Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem houses one of the most important collections of ancient and rare works of art, ranging from the dawn of civilization to the Byzantine period. The collection depicts religious myths and scenes of everyday life, which illuminate the world of the Bible, the cradle of our civilization.

We would like to express our gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Noriyoshi Horiuchi, for their support of this catalog, and to the American Friends of the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem, El Al Israel Airlines, Lands of the Bible Archaeology Foundation, Toronto, Canada, Mr. Avi Golan, Vice-Chairman of the Board and Mr. Thomas A. Rose, Publisher, of The Jerusalem Post, Maariv, Menorah Insurance, Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, Ministry of Science, Culture and Sport, and an Anonymous Donor whose generous contributions have enabled us to realize this exhibition and catalog. We are indebted to the many institutions and individuals who loaned artifacts to this exhibition, and to the numerous scholars who assisted us with their valuable suggestions in the written materials.

We would also like to thank Mr. Gerhard Viegel our guest exhibition designer from Vienna for his creative and innovative design.

Additionally, we want to acknowledge the achievements of our curator, Dr. Joan Goodnick Westenholz, for her diligence and effort in preparing this exhibition and catalog. Every exhibition and catalog is a major undertaking and no job of this magnitude is achieved alone. We would therefore like to express our congratulations and gratitude to the entire staff of the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem, who have once again outdone themselves through teamwork and dedication in this grand achievement.

B ATYA BOROWSKI

Director, Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem Jerusalem, January 2000

FOREWORD

This catalogue accompanies the exhibition 'Images of Inspiration: The Old Testament in Early Christian Art'. The exhibition examines the use of biblical imagery in the art of the first Christians, and reveals how the Old Testament provided an important source of inspiration for artists at the very beginning of Christianity.

The development of Christianity two thousand years ago marked the growth of a new religion whose roots lay deep in Jewish soil. The first Christians were for the most part Jews, well-versed in the Old Testament, who regarded Jesus as the fulfillment of biblical prophecies regarding the arrival of the Messiah. With this belief in mind, early Christians reinterpreted the stories of the Old Testament, applying new layers of meaning to the original biblical tales. In the words of Paul, 'Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope' (Romans 15: 4).

The objects collected here illustrate the art of the emerging Christian faith, illustrating the transition from the first Jewish-separatist followers of Jesus to the rich, layered, vigorous and inspired religion of the fourth to seventh centuries. Early Christian art reveals the theological as well as the artistic evolution taking place in the earliest and most formative period of Christianity's development. The Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem presents this exploration of biblical stories and images at the moment of their theological and artistic reappropriation by the emergent Christian faith. Like Jewish artists before and contemporaneous with them, the early Christians found in these biblical stories the central themes of sacrifice and redemption, resurrection and salvation, hope, peace and eternal welfare. It is this formative period of Christianity that is evoked in the collection of treasures gathered in this exhibition.

The successful realization of the exhibition is the result of the collaboration of many colleagues in Israel and abroad, whose assistance is greatly appreciated. I would like to express our heartfelt indebtedness to Prof. Maurice Gilbert SJ of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome and Jerusalem, for his generous assistance and illuminating comments during the preparation of this catalogue. We are also most grateful for the assistance and advice of L. Alexander Wolfe, from the inception of this project to its realization.

We wish to thank Prof. Raphael Loewe of University College, London; Prof. J.A. Crook, St John's College, Cambridge; and Dr. Joyce Reynolds, Newnham College, Cambridge, for making a provisional suggestion for the reading of the inscription of no. 41. We would also like to acknowledge the help of Prof. Michael E. Stone of the Hebrew University for the deciphering of the inscription of no. 65.

We are grateful to the officials of the Israel Antiquity Authority: Hava Katz, Baruch Brandl, Miki Saban, Ornit Ilan, and their assistants, as well as to Ofra Rimon of the Hecht Museum, Haifa, Rina Ingret of the Sdot Yam Museum of the Antiquities of Caesarea and Shlomit Namelich of the Katzrin Archeological Museum. We would also like to thank Uza Zevulun, Ziva Simon, and Cecilia Meir of the Eretz Israel Museum,

for lending us objects from their collections. In addition, we extend our gratitude to Mr. Avshalom Zemer and Merav Banai of the National Maritime Museum, Haifa, and to Prof. Michele Piccirillo, Director of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum (Flagellatio), Jerusalem, for his assistance.

We also acknowledge with thanks the help provided by our colleagues abroad: Dr. Arne Effenberger, Direktor, and Dr. Gabriele Mietke, Curator, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Spätantike und Byzantinische Kunst; Dottoressa Anna Rastrelli, Direttore, Antiche Collezioni, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Firenze; Prof. Hansgerd Hellenkemper, Direktor, and Dr. Friederike Naumann-Steckner and Dr. Matthias Riedel, Curators of the Römisch-Germanisches Museum, Cologne; Prof. Alain Pasquier, Conservateur Général, Dépt. des Antiquités Grecques, Etrusques et Romaines, Musée du Louvre, Paris; Dottoressa Lista, Soprintendenza Archeologica delle Province di Napoli e Caserta; Dr. Sheila Campbell, Curator, Malcove Collection, University of Toronto; Arch. Carlo Capponi, Curator, Museo della Basilica Sant' Ambrogio, Milan.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to all those who worked with me to prepare this catalogue and the exhibition. I am most grateful to Lindsey Taylor-Guthartz, who assisted me in producing this catalogue and shared with us her wide knowledge of the ancient world, and to the staff of Keter Publishing whose efficiency has been most impressive. I am indebted to all members of the curatorial department without whose persistence and steadfastness this volume would not have seen the light of day – first, to Natalie Naomi May and Dean Shanson who undertook the basic research and composed the initial drafts of the catalogue, and second to Shlomit Israeli, Yehuda Kaplan and especially Samuel Rocca who worked with exceptional dedication to produce the final versions of the catalogue and the display. I would also like to thank Jason Kemper for his efficient handling of the numerous details involved in setting up the exhibition. I would also like to acknowledge the arduous work on the display of the objects which was undertaken by our conservation department, Regula Müller-Shacham and Jessica Waller and the lovely artwork which was drawn by Dalit Weinblatt-Krauz.

Our acknowledgements would not be complete without mentioning our director, Batya Borowski, whose vision and enthusiasm have been behind the entire process of planning and arranging the exhibition. Finally, our utmost gratitude goes to Dr. Elie Borowski, Founder of the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem, without whom none of this would have been possible.

JOAN GOODNICK WESTENHOLZ

Chief Curator Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem Jerusalem, January 2000

EARLY CHRISTIAN ART: MESSAGE AND MEDIA

THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIAN ART

Next to nothing is known about the beginnings of a specifically Christian form of art; the first examples only appear about 180 CE. Many reasons have been given for this phenomenon, such as fear of the pagan establishment or the small numbers of Christians. but the most commonly cited factor is the aversion to representational arts rooted in the Jewish origin of Christianity, as expressed in the second commandment: 'You shall not make yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything in heaven above or on earth beneath or in the waters under the earth' (Exod. 20: 4). As the child of Judaism, primitive Christianity was a religion simultaneously hostile to pictures in theory (iconophobic) and opposed to their use in practice (aniconic). This point of view was maintained well into the fourth century by clerics, and lasted much later in some places. Early secondcentury Christian apologists attacked Greek art, invoking Jewish precedents as well as Greek rationalistic arguments against idolatry. They opposed the idea that divinity could be visually represented, and argued that Christians worshipped spiritually and had no need for a materialistic cult.

By the late second and early third centuries the situation had changed. Aniconism, which had been a hallmark of the primitive Christian community, began to give way to a new attitude, and Christians began to use various art forms. First, they employed the formal vocabulary of classical art to propagate the message of their new religion expressing new ideas under old forms: the story of Orpheus was interpreted as a type of David and a type of Jesus, and the late classical characters of Amor and Psyche became symbols of divine love and the soul. Second, they used or selectively adapted whatever artistic

expressions were available – decorative motifs such as those of the good shepherd, fish, anchors, doves, and orantes were reused with a Christian connotation. Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150–215) prescribed: 'And let our seals be either a dove, or a fish, or a ship scudding before the wind, or a musical lyre, which Polycrates used, or a ship's anchor, which Seleucus had engraved as a device; and if there be one fishing, he will remember the apostle, and the children drawn out of the water. For we are not to delineate the faces of idols, we who are prohibited to cleave to them' (*The Instructor*, vol. I, book III, ch. XI).

Last but not least, they used the stories of the Old Testament as the main subjects of narrative art. This biblical imagery was employed to convey the sacred stories and morals of the Bible to a pagan world. The Christian message was mediated via a Christian interpretation of the Hebrew Bible. The most convincing explanation yet proposed for the selection of these biblical themes on catacomb walls and sarcophagi imagery is that they are based upon prayers for salvation. In the appeal to God, examples of his redeeming work were cited: Jonah in the belly of the whale. Daniel in the lions' den and so forth. The presence of the biblical scenes next to the bodies of the dead had the same significance as the prayer of the burial office, the comendatio animae: they recounted the precedents for divine intervention for the faithful and expressed the desire that God might exercise the same mercy toward the newly dead: 'God, save him as you saved Daniel, Noah etc." Although the earliest Latin version of these prayers only dates from the fifth century, the formulae, with their references to God's saving intervention on behalf of his people, must have been known as early as the third century. They ultimately go back to Jewish prayers of the zichronot type.

If it seems surprising to find Christianity creating a religious figurative art after being a nonrepresentational religion for two centuries, it is still more astonishing to see a shift in the same direction among Jews in the same period and in the same variety: wall paintings, floor mosaics, sculptured objects and household artifacts. Both trends may reflect the effort to present the tokens of God's works and deeds to the community and possibly to impress the gentile world. The pictorial representation of Christian themes was justified with the dictum: *Quod legentibus scriptura*, *hoc idiotis pictura* 'As writing is to those who can read, so is painting to the ignorant'.

The third century witnessed the coming-of-age of early Christian art as a separate religious culture, though the association of pagan idolatry with monumental sculpture continued to discourage the development of sculpture in the round among Christians. The inspiration of the first Christian art was liturgical, concentrating on baptism and the burial of the dead. It was the popular artists and their lower-class patrons who used the stories of deliverance, redemption and salvation taken from the Hebrew scriptures, and the symbols of healing and identity taken from earlier Christian traditions.

To begin with, all that was truly new about this art was its inspiration; the techniques and forms, the choice of the material and scale of the works were in the main traditional. The influence of provincial, oriental and classical art can be seen in the early examples. Certain features were characteristic: simplification of forms (often reduced to geometric figures); concentration on a few expressive traits; a disregard of space and of the relative size of depicted objects; indifference to plastic values, to weight and lighting; preference for purely surface effects as against those suggesting the third dimension. Planes were simplified, perspective reduced or eliminated altogether, and details of costume were emphasized, but modelling was only lightly indicated.

By the fourth century, early Christian art became an imperial art, created by court artists and supported

by the state; this 'authorization' of Christian art transformed it from a popular and primarily narrative art into a medium for christological instruction and theological orthodoxy. Legally tolerated in 313, Christianity became the official religion of the Empire in 383; this marked the birth of a monumental Christian art which followed imperial iconography.

Consequently, Christian iconography outgrew its experimental stage and became fixed, and the biblical repertoire was greatly enriched. Common models in fourth-century pattern books are assumed to be the source, as well as illuminated Jewish biblical texts. This fits well with the nature of Christian art as book art and the development of the illuminated manuscript as the medium of the Christian message. Even when divorced from the book, Early Christian illustrations generally retained the close relationship to the Bible text, with the addition of borrowed elements from extrabiblical sources introduced to heighten the drama and to stress the religious significance.

Theological interpretations also permeated early Christian art, both because of Christian reinterpretations of the Old Testament and because of Christian interest in establishing the continuity of the Old and New Testaments. Thus, the artist of the Vienna Genesis gave visual expression to a Christian interpretation of Jacob's blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh (48: 8-20) by emphasizing the cruciform pattern of Jacob's arms.

Different art historians suggest different dates for the end of this formative period of Christian art. The minimalists regard early Christian art as covering only the third and fourth centuries, and assign the fifth and sixth centuries to two different artistic trends: Western Christian art and early Byzantine art. The most common terminal date is the defeat of Heraclius I in 639 CE, when the expansionist policies of the Byzantine Empire collapsed, heralding the decline of this flourishing period of art.

MEDIA OF EARLY CHRISTIAN ART

Early Christian depictions of biblical stories and images appeared on a variety of objects, including illuminated manuscripts, frescoes, mosaics, sarcophagi, textiles, vessels, medallions, gems, coins, carved ivories, gold decorated glass, and household utensils. The same artists produced the objects, so that Jewish, pagan and Christian subjects occur side by side on the products of the same studios. Thus, there is no specific early Christian art style, since whatever the medium might be - sculpture, painting, pottery or mosaic - early Christian art was as diverse as the religions and sources from which it derived. Without any overt Christian style or symbols, it is difficult to decide whether an object bearing an Old Testament narrative subject is to be assigned to Early Christian or Jewish art. Consequently, it is usually the context of the find that determines the attribution. Thus, Early Christian Art usually refers to any work of art produced by or for Christians.

WOOD

Few examples made of wood have survived, even though it was widely used in antiquity both for building purposes and for small, cheap objects. Wood was often employed for the construction of roof beams (see no. 94) and doors (see no. 50); fortunately, four examples of carved church doors from the late antique period have survived, two from the Latin West and two from the Greek East. Two panels from the doors of the Basilica of the Martyrs, erected in 382, appear in our exhibition (no. 50); they depict episodes from the life of King David.

GEMS, AMULETS AND TALISMANS

The use of amulets in the early Christian period continued a tradition that went back for millennia in the pagan world, but was condemned by the Fathers of the Church and at several church councils. The amulets were often pierced to enable them to

be worn on the owner's body, and were intended to provide the wearer with magical protection. Amulets were also placed under houses and places of worship, and were used as wall plaques. Amongst the stylistic sources of Christian amulets were Jewish prototypes, which themselves had been strongly affected by pagan influence, particularly during the Hellenistic period. There are many types of amulets and talismans, in various materials, examples of which can be seen in this catalogue.

SARCOPHAGI

In the third century, there were three main centres for the productions of sarcophagi: Rome, Attica and Asia Minor. After the fourth century the sarcophagus declined in importance as a medium for the display of Christian iconography in the decaying Western Roman empire when the barbarian invasions disrupted the various manufacturing centres. Christians were then buried in simple inhumations laid directly into the earth or in wooden coffins, though a group of early fifth-century sarcophagi from Ravenna (Italy) continue the style of the architectural sarcophagi on a reduced scale.

POTTERY

Christianity reached North Africa at the beginning of the second century, and spread so rapidly that in 197 CE the Christian polemicist Tertullian claimed that the Christians, although latecomers to the mosaic of religions in Roman North Africa, had spread over all the cities, leaving the pagans with nowhere to go but their temples! This expansion coincided with an extraordinary expansion of the olive oil industry. Linked to the export of agricultural products, the manufacture of pottery developed in the second and third centuries. Then, in the middle of the third century, a new type of table ware made its appearance, the 'North African red slip ware', many examples of which can be seen in this catalogue.

COSTUME IN EARLY CHRISTIAN ART

Just as in modern society, the inhabitants of the Roman empire of the second to sixth centuries were acutely aware of the statements about social class, wealth, and attitudes implicit in the clothes worn by those around them. The fabric of which a tunic was made, the skill with which a mantle was draped, or the use of a cheap bronze or expensive gold fibula brooch to fasten a cloak would all have spoken eloquently of the wearer's rank. All these connotations would have played their part in early Christian art, since it was customary to portray characters in mythical and biblical scenes in contemporary costume, following earlier Graeco-Roman artistic traditions. For example, a sixthcentury black-figure vase from Greece portrays two heroes from the Illiad, dressed in contemporary armour and playing a game of draughts, in a scene which does not attempt to give any idea of their earlier Bronze Age environment; and in a fresco showing Samuel anointing David, from the thirdcentury CE synagogue of Dura Europos in Syria, David and his brothers wear up-to-the-minute knee-length tunics in tasteful shades of pink, ochre and white, with the two dark vertical stripes (clavi) typical of this period, covered by matching or contrasted mantles of brown, white, ochre and pink, all bearing the dark notched bands characteristic of contemporary Jewish dress.

It is therefore important that we have some understanding of the variations in contemporary dress and their social and economic significance when considering the ways in which early Christians depicted scenes from the Bible. It is notable that with few exceptions all the figures shown, even that of Jesus, are shown wearing contemporary clothes; there is no parallel to the Graeco-Roman depiction

of pagan deities, which followed conventions established in the Hellenistic period (fourth-third centuries B.C.E.) that did not change in later periods. Might this be indicative of a closer, more intimate relationship between early Christians and their most important models, inspirational figures, and saviour?

The few anachronistic costumes are not related to any specific type of person. Examples from both ends of the social system are shown: for instance, Solomon (nos. 66 and 67, see below) and the sailors throwing Jonah overboard, who are shown in short sleeveless tunics and *pileum* hats (no. 62), the costume of the eternal sailor (the costume of Odysseus and his crew from the Hellenistic period onwards).

Sources for our knowledge of costume in late antiquity include wall paintings, monumental reliefs, sarcophagi, painted portraits (from Egypt), mosaics, and even some actual garments, such as those excavated by Yigael Yadin in the 'Bar Kokhba caves' of the Judaean Desert. Contemporary texts and literary references, from Greek, Roman and Talmudic literature, throw light on the social significance of many of the clothes worn.

Fig. 1 Roman senator in toga, late second century

CIVILIAN COSTUME

LATE SECOND-EARLY FOURTH CENTURIES

By this time, the nature of Roman society had undergone some very fundamental changes; although it had always been divided into a small upper class and a much larger lower class, the essential distinction had been that between citizens and non-citizens. However, in the reign of the emperor Caracalla (211-217), Roman citizenship was extended to all free inhabitants of the empire; it consequently declined in importance, and was replaced by a much more rigid system of class distinctions. The population was now divided into two principal classes: an upper class, known as the honestiores, who belonged to the earlier classes of the senatores ('senators', of both the original Roman and the provincial senates) and equites ('knights', who filled official positions connected to the Emperor) and constituted about two per cent of the population; and a lower class, the humiliores, who were made up of the rest of the population. The distinction was enshrined in the legal system: the honestiores received preference in the courts, being punished by exile and fines, rather than by the various savage forms of execution (such as crucifixion) and torture which the humiliores could expect. Naturally, this division was visible in costume too.

UPPER CLASSES: MEN

The most important formal garment worn by members of the upper classes, including the emperor himself, was the *toga*, which had originally been the typical attire of all Roman citizens, of all classes (see fig. 1). It was a vast woollen semicircle, about six metres along the straight edge and two metres wide, and was worn draped around the body over a *tunica* (tunic); during religious ceremonies, a fold of cloth would be pulled over the head. Though undeniably

impressive, it must have been both heavy and hot to wear. In the fresco depicting a parody of the Judgement of Solomon, the king is shown wearing a *toga*, thus representing him as a Roman magistrate (no. 58). There were several varieties of *toga*, each with its own special significance.

The less formal *pallium* was usually worn draped over the left shoulder, slung across the back and under the right arm, and then drawn across the front of the body and thrown over the bent left arm. It must have been considerably less uncomfortable to wear than the *toga*, and seems to have replaced it gradually among the lower classes for use on formal occasions.

In the East, among the aristocracy of the Greek city-states, the garment that conveyed prestige was the *himation* (see fig. 2), a woollen garment that closely resembled the western

pallium. This may be why so many biblical figures (such as Moses on nos. 10, 41, 42) are portrayed wearing the pallium or himation rather than the toga, which may have had connotations of officialdom (often hostile to Christians in this period); it conveyed a sense of dignity and importance independent of official rank (see, for instance, the figures of Jesus and the apostles on the sarcophagus of Julia Latronilla, no. 2, or, over an ankle-length tunic, on the spectators at the Judgement of Solomon, no. 58).

The *tunica* (tunic) worn under the *toga* consisted of a simple knee-length tube



Fig. 2 Greek boulates, dressed in a himation, late second century



of material with openings for the head and arms; in the Greek-speaking East it was known as a *chiton*, and might be shorter than its western counterpart. It had two vertical stripes (*clavi*) on the front and back, and surviving examples are known from the 'Bar Kokhba' caves. The *tunica* could have long or short sleeves, and in cold climates, a short-sleeved one might be worn over a long-sleeved example. In winter, the *lacerna*, a rectangular woollen cloak with rounded corners and a hood, might be worn over the *toga*, fastened at the shoulder by a *fibula* (brooch). An ankle-length tunic is worn by the dead child and by the young Noah on the child's sarcophagus from Sardinia (no. 41).

In the Greek-speaking East, the *chlamys*, a semicircular mantle which had originated as an outdoor garment, had become the symbol of the upper classes and even of rulers, probably because it had been worn by Macedonian soldiers, the elite fighting forces of Alexander the Great. Examples of the *chlamys* can be seen worn by king Solomon (nos. 66, 68 and 69), who is shown here in the garb of a Hellenistic monarch, complete with diadem.

The usual type of shoe was the *crepida*, a half-boot which left the toes uncovered; there was also the *calceus*, a boot with a slit over each ankle to make it easier to put on, and was kept in place by leather tongs. Sandals were also worn, mainly indoors.

LOWER CLASSES: MEN

The main item of dress of the *humiliores* was a short-sleeved tunic known as the *colobium* (see fig. 3); when a man was doing strenuous or menial work, he would often pull his right arm out of the sleeve, leaving the right shoulder bare (see fig. 4).

Items nos. 20 and 21 depict a figure who has been identified as Abraham wearing a tunic of this sort, though this rather unusual choice of garment might lend weight to the suggestion that he actually



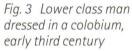




Fig. 4 Lower class man in working dress, second century

represents a character from pagan myth, such as Idomeneus, rather than the biblical patriarch. Other examples of the *colobium* appear on the slave on the marble receptacle (no. 55), and worn by the Good Shepherd (nos. 52 and 57). This would support the interpretation of the shepherd shown on these objects as a mortal keeper of sheep rather than a symbolic or religious figure. The Good Shepherd is also portrayed in a long-sleeved tunic (nos. 53 and 54), like the other men on the marble receptacle (no. 55).

Other garments worn by lower class men included the *burrus*, a rectangular cloak of thick, coarse wool with a hood (*cucullus*), and the *paenula*, a semicircular cloak fastened at the front, often with a hood, which was worn by men and women when travelling. Another type of cloak was the *abolla* (see fig. 5); it was rectangular and made of wool, and was worn folded double, fastened with a *fibula* on the right shoulder, like the cloak worn by Joseph on nos. 38 and 39.

The most popular type of footwear was the





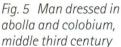




Fig. 6 Roman matrona dressed in a stola and a palla, early second century

sandal, which was very cheap; peasants wore the *pero*, a low boot fastened by a short leather thong, with a slit down the front.

UPPER AND LOWER CLASSES: WOMEN

Roman women wore clothes very similar to those of Greek women in the classical and Hellenistic periods (see fig. 6). First came the *stola*, an ankle-length tunic which might be worn over an inner tunic in the winter (see for instance, the two women as well as the spectators in the Judgement of Solomon, no. 58, the depiction of Potiphar's wife on nos. 38 and 39, and the Israelite woman crouching to drink on no. 42); it was called the *chiton* in the Greek-speaking East. The sleeves were generally fastened by small *fibulae*, rather than sewn like the sleeves of men's tunics, and the tunic was gathered in by a belt beneath the breasts; there would often be an *insita* (narrow border) at the bottom. Over this women would wear a *palla* (known as a *himation* in the East), a woollen

mantle dyed in various colours or adorned with a pattern; it could be draped in all manner of ways, and was used to cover the head as a sign of modesty (when a woman walked in the street, for instance), or as with men, during religious ceremonies. The figure of Mary on a child's sarcophagus from Sardinia (no. 41), for instance, is shown with her palla modestly drawn over her head, in the manner of a respectable matrona (upper-class woman), like the woman suffering from the haemorrhage and the mother of Nain, who also cover their heads on the Julia Latronilla sarcophagus (no. 2). Women wore the same sort of shoes as men. Lower class women wore similar dress, like the long short-sleeved tunic and palla worn by one of the women in Solomon's Judgement, on nos. 61 and 62.

FOURTH-SIXTH CENTURIES

Social change continued apace, with the emperor becoming an ever more distant and god-like figure, regarded as God's earthly representative, and the creation of a strongly hierarchical bureaucracy to administer the slowly decaying empire. The imperial bust that plays the role of the idol in the scene of the three Hebrew children before Nebuchadnezzar harks back to earlier statues, presenting a bearded image of the monarch closer to the ideal emperorphilosopher of the second century. Civilian and military spheres were clearly delineated, with different types of official dress used in each sphere.

UPPER CLASSES: MEN

The emperor's exalted status was reflected in his dress: he wore luxurious purple silk robes and was crowned by a pearl-studded diadem (see King Nebuchadnezzer on no. 121). From the mid-fourth century onwards, the *toga* was reserved for the emperor and the consuls; by now it had developed into a purely formal garment (the *toga contabulum*; see fig. 7), folded and draped in a stylized and



Fig. 7 Roman senator in toga contabulum, end of fourth century

elaborate manner (see the depiction of Julia Latronilla's husband on her sarcophagus, no. 2).

The tunic was also changing. The style known from Egyptian (Coptic) finds was generally white, with wider clavi (stripes) than before, and can be seen worn by Abraham on nos. 23, 24, 25. Nebuchadnezzar is also shown dressed simply in a long-sleeved tunic in no. 120. Squares or circles of fabric (orbiculi) in different colours were sewn on the shoulders, and were sometimes repeated on the lower part of the clothing. On the most highly decorated examples, the neck is bordered by a large rectangular band, generally decorated with elaborate scenes. The decorative panels were worked on linen, with the scenes embroidered in pattern darning with coloured wool. Tunics worn by the upper classes seem to have been longer. Over them, officials usually wore the chlamys, fastened at the right shoulder by a fibula. Military officers and civil servants seem to

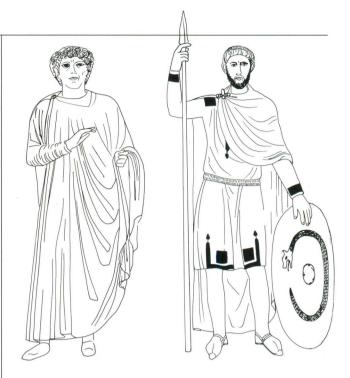


Fig. 8 Civilian magistrate, dressed in chlamys, early fifth century

Fig. 9 Military officer, dressed in chlamys, early fifth century

have draped their *chlamys* in distinctive ways, and probably wore different colours; those of civil officials seem to have been white, and were arranged to fall in front, more like a *toga* than a mantle (fig. 8), and see the three angels visiting Abraham on no. 16; they are clearly wearing the garb of important personages). The *chlamys* adopted by soldiers was embroidered in various colours, and fell down the back like a cloak (fig. 9). Long, tight *bracae* were now often worn under the tunic by members of all social classes.

LOWER CLASSES: MEN

The lower classes still wore the knee-length colubium, with a pallium draped over it, showing very little change from the earlier period. The anklelength tunic covered with a pallium is worn by Abraham (no. 29) and by Jesus and the apostles (nos. 96, 131). A short-sleeved tunic can be seen worn by



Fig. 10 Lower class man in paenula, early fourth century

Abraham in nos. 22 and 27, while there is a long-sleeved tunic in the depiction of the Good Shepherd (no. 54). The *paenula* became a common garment. It could be worn short as a mantle with a hood, or as a sort of poncho decorated with *clavi*, over a tunic (see fig. 10). This cloak appears on another representation of the Good Shepherd, on mould no. 22.

UPPER AND LOWER CLASSES: WOMEN

Women now wore the *dalmatica*, an ankle-length tunic with wide sleeves, decorated with wide clavi. The *dalmatica* could be belted below the breasts, or left loose (see fig. 11), and could also be worn by men (as for instance, by Daniel on no. 10). Upper class women, however, still wore the traditional dress of the Roman *matrona* during formal occasions (as does Julia Latronilla on her sarcophagus, no. 2, and the owner of the sarcophagus fragment no. 53). In this case, a *stola* would be worn under the *dalmatica*, with a *palla* draped on top. From the fifth century onwards, however, the *palla* was worn loose, like a cloak, and not draped (see fig. 12).



'BARBARIAN' COSTUME

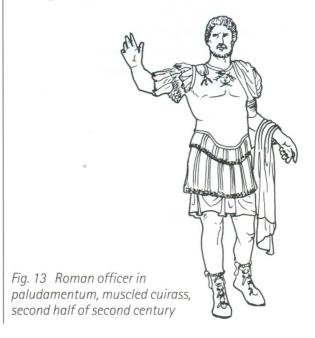
Another important distinction in the Roman world was that between the 'civilized' inhabitants of the empire and the 'barbarian' peoples beyond and near its borders; though feared for their strange, uncouth ways and the threat they posed to the security of the empire, they were also fascinatingly exotic. A wide range of native garments was still worn in the border provinces and beyond them, where Roman influence was much weaker.

In Gaul and Germany, although the romanized upper classes adopted Roman dress when playing their roles as members of local senates, the local peasants probably retained their traditional Celtic and Germanic dress: for men, this consisted of *bracae* (long, tight trousers), a long-sleeved tunic, and a cloak or plaid fastened by a *fibula* on the right shoulder. Both the *bracae* and cloak were generally woven in a checked pattern, similar to the modern Scottish tartan.

In the East, some members of the upper classes, and probably most of the lower classes, wore Parthian dress, which had evolved from the costume of the preceding Achaemenid period. Men wore loose trousers inside half boots and long-sleeved tunics, which in the case of the upper classes were heavily embroidered in gold floral patterns on the front and sleeves. A tall, cylindrical polos hat was worn (see for instance, the goddess on no. 16, and the Israelite women on nos. 41 and 42), rather than the much earlier Phrygian cap; however, although the latter had ceased to be generally worn in the third century BCE, Roman artists continued to use it as a convenient marker to indicate an eastern 'barbarian', and it can be seen playing this role in several depictions of Daniel (nos. 94 and 95), the Three Hebrews (nos. 120, 122, 125), and the Magi (nos. 3, 41 and 131). Solomon is represented as an oriental ruler in a long tunic and *bracae*, sitting in judgement on nos. 59 and 60. A somewhat more contemporary version of eastern dress can be seen in no. 111, where Daniel wears a long, pleated kilt, and is bareheaded except for a fillet.

MILITARY DRESS

As with other forms of costume, military dress reflected differences of rank. In the second century, the emperor, when on campaign, wore a bronze cuirass modelled to look like a naked, muscular torso, and equipped with *pteruges*, protective hanging strips of leather. He and other senior officers wore a knotted sash over their armour. Solomon is shown in this type of military dress on no. 69. Officers also wore a large rectangular cloak (*paludamentum*); the emperor's was purple, while those of other officers were red (see fig. 13). Their equipment also included a bronze helmet, and a long sword (*parazonium*). Examples of emperors in this type of military garb can be seen on the coins in the exhibition (nos. 11, 12 and 19). Although they must be of relatively low rank, the



soldiers in the Judgement of Solomon (no. 58) are also shown wearing the same bronze muscular cuirass – purely as an artistic convention, with no relation to what soldiers would really have worn.

Further down the hierarchy, the principal difference was between the legions (made up of Roman citizens) and the *auxilia* (troops recruited in the provinces, who received Roman citizenship after their military service, or soldiers from allied kingdoms). As leisure dress, all wore short tunics, military sandals (*caligae*) and a cloak (*sagum*). In cold climates they might wear short *bracae* under the tunic.

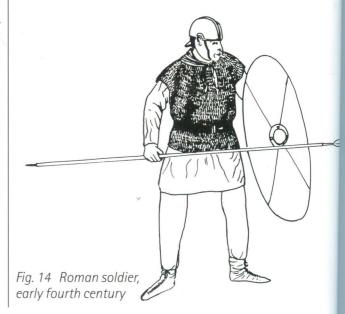
At the end of the second century, the army's equipment changed again, with a general trend towards lighter equipment. As Roman citizenship was extended to more and more inhabitants of the empire, the differences between the legions and the auxiliary forces lessened. These changes do not seem to have entered Christian iconography, with the result that anachronistic images appear in the third century: magic gems thus depict Solomon as lightlyarmed horseman wearing a tunic, a cuirass equipped with pteruges, a chlamys fastened at his right shoulder, and riding boots, as on nos. 66 and 67. This image of Solomon is more Hellenistic than Roman; he seems to have modelled on Alexander the Great or a Macedonian horseman, rather than on a Roman emperor.

The army was reorganized by the emperor Constantine (306–337) into three main types of unit: comitatenses (mobile units), limitanei (permanently stationed frontier troops), and palatini (the imperial guard). By this time, the old legions and auxilia had completely disappeared. Nebuchadnezzar's guard is dressed in a long-sleeved tunic and a cloak, fastened on the left shoulder, and armed with a round shield and a spear; he might be a member of the imperial bodyguard, the auxilia palatina (no. 121).

By the beginning of the fourth century, soldiers

wore a very cheap bronze helmet, of Sassanian origin, and sometimes the lorica hamata (chain mail), in a shorter version. More often than not, body armour was completely discarded, partly because of the influx of soldiers of barbarian origin, who were not accustomed to wear body armour. The round or flat oval shield was still very popular, and each unit decorated theirs with its own special insignia (see fig. 14). Examples from this period can be seen in the soldiers guarding Jesus' sepulchre on Julia Latronilla's sarcophagus (no. 2) and in Nebuchadnezzar's bodyguard (no. 121). The standard weapons were now the spatha, hung on a leather baldric, and a spear. In this period, wide leather belts formed an important part of military dress; nos. 46, 49, 90 and 91 are buckles from this type of belt. Cavalrymen were very heavily armed, with a helmet that completely covered the head and a scale or mail cuirass. They carried the same weapons as the infantry.

The emperor and his officers were now shown wearing short lamellar cuirasses. The new style can be seen on the magic gems depicting Solomon and Sisinnius, who are depicted as heavily-armed



Byzantine horsemen, wearing lamellar cuirasses and cloaks, and carrying spears (nos. 71–76).

Depictions of various soldiers in early Christian art are shown anachronistically. For instance, the soldier in the Judgement of Solomon (no. 61), from the fourth century, holds a second century *gladius*, wears a helmet shaped like a Phrygian cap (which ceased to be worn in the third century BCE), and is dressed in a short military tunic with a linen or leather corselet characteristic of archaic and classical Greek and Hellenistic heavy infantry. On sixth-seventh century ampulae, St Menas is dressed in the imperial style of the first-third centuries, wearing a short-sleeved tunic under a muscular cuirass with *pteruges*, a *chlamys*, and military boots (nos. 118 and 119).

JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN COSTUME

The main sources for our knowledge of the types of clothing worn by Jews are talmudic literature, the Bar Kokhba finds of garments and textiles, and the Dura Europos frescoes.

There was no specifically Jewish costume: the Patriarch, the officially recognized dynastic ruler of the Jews living in the Roman empire, dressed like a Roman dignitary; the rabbis wore the same clothes as local magistrates in the Greek-speaking part of the Roman empire; and the common man dressed like the contemporary city proletariat or rural peasant. Some of the rabbis condemned national forms of dress, such as the Roman toga (though this does not mean that a Jewish Roman citizen would not have worn one).

There were, however, some details that would have marked an individual as Jew. First of all, different kinds of fibres, such as wool and linen, would not have been mixed together in a single fabric or garment (sha'atnez); and men would have worn

tsitsit, ritual fringes, on the corners of their mantles.

In the mishnaic and talmudic periods (third-fifth centuries CE), a Jewish man would have worn a haluq or short tunic, decorated with clavi, and the talith a rectangular mantle decorated with notched bands, similar to the himation or pallium (see fig. 15). Women wore long tunics and mantles, decorated with a gamma-shaped pattern, that closely resembled the palla or the himation. The gamma pattern was probably not limited to Jewish women, however, since women in Roman Egypt are known to have worn mantles with this motif.

Neither ordinary Christians nor the Christian clergy had any form of distinctive dress at this period. At first deacons wore the *colobium*; after the third



Fig. 15 Jewish magistrate, middle third century

century, the dalmatica was adopted. These ancient garments survive in Catholic and other Christian clerical dress. The stola has metamorphosed into the stole, the strip of silk or other material hanging from the back of the neck over the left shoulder and down to knees, which is worn by deacons; and the dalmatica has become the dalmatic, a wide-sleeved, long, loose vestment with slit sides, worn by deacons and bishops on some occasions, and by kings and emperors, especially at coronations. There is also a ecclesiastical 'tunicle', derived from the tunica, and a chasuble - a sleeveless tabard-like garment worn by a priest when celebrating Mass - derived from the Roman paenula, which was also known as a casula. The pallium has shrunk into a circular strip of white lamb's wool, worn over the chasuble by popes, archbishops and some bishops.

CLOTHEDNESS AND NAKEDNESS

It is interesting to note that while most biblical figures are shown dressed in the above variety of costumes, others shown naked: Jonah in all scenes (also the sailors), Daniel in nos. 96, 98, 99, 104 (naked with Phyrgian hat), 106, 110 (naked with cloak on shoulder and Phrygian cap), three Hebrew children in nos. 126 (naked, curly-haired children, holding each other's hands), 127, 128 (emerging unscathed from the fire), 129, and of course Adam and Eve. All these figures seem reflect the pagan mores which enshrined the perfection of the male human body, in particular, in the stance of the heroic nude. The depiction of the Three Hebrews as *putti* demonstrates the debt to Hellenistic-Roman iconography.

SUMMARY

Perhaps the most striking feature of the costume assigned to biblical characters in early Christian art is its 'ordinariness'; with a few exceptions, characters from both the Old and New Testaments were shown in the sort of clothes which would have been worn by the Christians themselves and by their neighbours, both Jewish and pagan. Military dress appeared on soldier saints such as St Menas, or warrior kings, such as Solomon; biblical kings such as Nebuchadnezzar and David were depicted in the attire of contemporary rulers, both Hellenistic and Roman; and notably 'eastern' figures such as Daniel or the Three Hebrews wore conventionally exotic 'barbarian' dress, but for the most part, the holy figures of the past who were regarded as sacred models by early Christians were shown as average contemporaries. Presumably early Christian artists might have chosen to develop a recognizably 'sacred' costume for these figures, as happened during and after the Renaissance; there was a precedent in the formal and conventionalized representation of the Graeco-Roman gods. Did they avoid this iconographical path because of distaste for the pagan world, including its artistic techniques (though they followed these in other respects), or did they feel particularly near to the biblical figures they portrayed, regarding them as immediate spiritual ancestors and models who could truly be imitated? Did the originally clandestine and underground nature of early Christianity find its reflection in the avoidance of costumes associated with hostile state officials? Whatever the factors behind the use of contemporary costume, the difference between these early biblical scenes, so rooted in their contemporary society, and the rather artificial, non-historical dress to which we have become accustomed in religious art still has the power to surprise and delight us.

CREATION

בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשְּׁמַיִם וָאֵת הָאָרֶץ: (בראשית א I)

'Εν ἀρχῆ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. (ΓΕΝΕΣΙΣ 1: 1)

IN PRINCIPIO CREAVIT DEUS CAELUM ET TERRAM. (GENESIS 1: 1)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1: 1)

1 Bread Stamp depicting the Waters of Creation

Bronze

Eastern Mediterranean

Fifth-sixth centuries

Height: 3.6 cm; length: 9.9 cm;

thickness: 0.5-0.7 cm Private collection

S-shaped bread stamp with raised border and a Greek inscription in raised relief. The inscription reads:

ΠΗΓΗΒΡΥΙ

Πηγή βρυῖ

'(The) fountain (of water) burst forth'

The inscription refers to the Creation, and to the 'fountain that rose out of the earth and watered the whole face of the earth' (Gen. 2: 6), reflecting the Greek of the Septuagint:

Πηγή δὲ ἀνέβαινεν ἐκ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπότιζε πᾶν τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γῆς

This quotation may reflect the statement in the Gospel of John: 'On the last day, the great day of the festival, Jesus stood and cried out: "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, let anyone who believes in me come and drink!" As scripture says, "From his heart, shall flow streams of living water." (7: 37–38).

The custom of pressing stamps onto bread dough was widespread in late pagan antiquity, and was used both in a religious context, such as marking offerings with images of the gods or their symbols, and for secular purposes, such as identifying the produce of different bakeries. Smaller bronze stamps of similar shape were also used for sealing vessels containing wine, oil and medical ointments. Bronze bread stamps were produced throughout the Eastern Mediterranean from the fifth century onwards,

though special stamps for religious use were not produced until later. They could be rectangular, round, crescent-shaped, cruciform, S-shaped, shaped like a shoe sole, or slipper-shaped. They are generally inscribed with an inscription, sometimes in mirror writing. The inscriptions generally consist of invocations, benedictions and biblical verses, and suggest connections with rites other than the Eucharist. After the fourth century, bread used in the Eucharist was stamped with crosses.

Thanks to its eucharistic associations and frequent appearance in the Gospels (e.g. the 'bread from heaven which giveth life', John 6: 32-35, or the use of bread at the Last Supper, instituting the Eucharist, Matt. 26: 26-29, Mark 14: 22-25, Luke 22: 14-20), bread became exceptionally important in Christian worship. Its non-eucharistic uses included the 'antidoron', the bread given to those who could not receive communion; the 'commemorative bread' served at funeral banquets (a custom adopted from the pagans); 'bread of special purpose' for saints' days and other holy days; bread which had received special prayers and blessings, for the sick; bread distributed to pilgrims at holy sites; and bread used in exorcisms to cleanse catechumens (candidates for baptism) of evil spirits and restore them to spiritual health.

The same baking method and ovens were used by Christians both for their daily bread and for that which was to be used in worship. At first, only leavened bread was used. The practice of using unleavened bread for the Eucharist was introduced much later.

Published: Shubin, Malter, Wolfe, 1994: 45, no. 299. References: Dölger, 1929: 1-54; Galavaris, 1970; Kötzsche, 1979d: 627-628, no. 565.



ADAM AND EVE



וַיִּשַׂע ה' אֶּלהִים גַּן־בְּעֵדֶן מִקֶּדֶם וַיְּשֶׂם שְׁם אֶת־הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר יָצָר: (בראשית ב 8)

Καὶ ἐφύτευσεν Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς παράδεισον ἐν Ἐδὲμ κατὰ ἀνατολὰς καὶ ἔθετο ἐκεῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ὁν ἔπλασεν. (ΓΕΝΕΣΙΣ 2:8)

PLANVERAT AUTEM DOMINUS DEUS PARADISUM VOLUPTATIS A PRINCIPIO IN QUO POSUIT HOMINEM QUEM FORMAVERAT. (GENESIS 2: 8)

And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, which is in the east, and there he put the man he had fashioned. (Genesis 2: 8)

FROM ADAM TO JESUS

Adam, as the progenitor of the human race and the archetypal human, plays a far greater role in Christian theological thought than in classical Judaism. Endowed with exceptional abilities and qualities, Adam was thought to have lost these at his Fall (the source of 'original sin'). As explained by Paul: 'It was through one man that sin came into the world, and through sin death, and thus death has spread through the whole human race because everyone has sinned.' (Romans 5: 12). Adam thus transmitted his fallen and corrupted nature to all his posterity. Only by the coming of Jesus, the 'Second Adam', was humanity restored to its original grandeur and perfection (Romans 5: 14–21).

2 SARCOPHAGUS OF JULIA LATRONILLA

Marble

Probably Rome, Italy

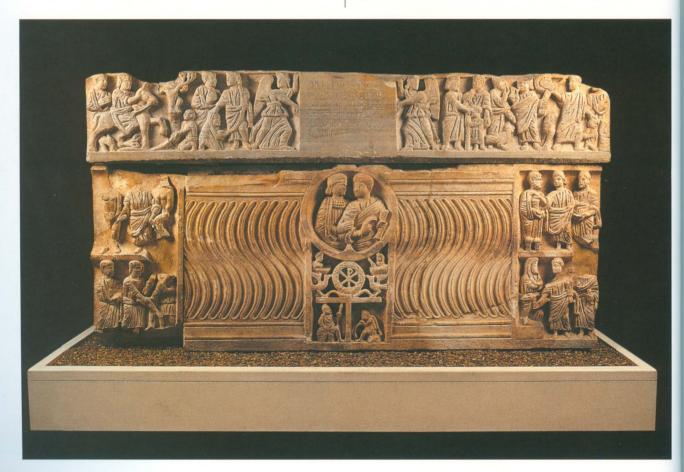
Ca. 330-340 CE

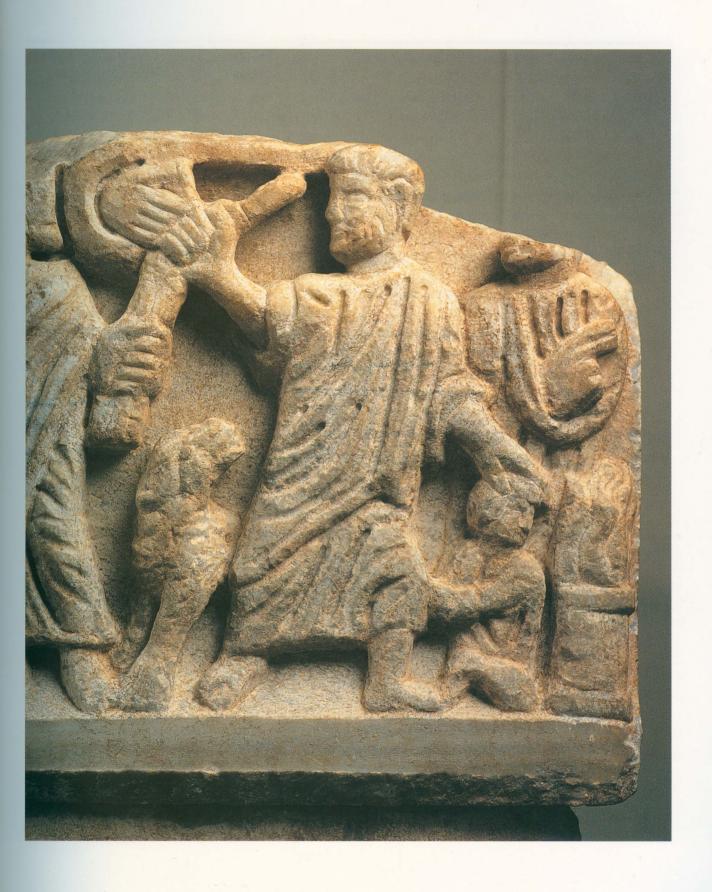
Height of chest: 76 cm; width: 208 cm;

length: 96/102 cm; height of lid: 35 cm

Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem 1057

Our understanding of humankind's changing ideas about life, death, and existence after death is mainly based on the evidence yielded by graves and burial equipment of various kinds. The symbols and iconography with which this sarcophagus is carved reveal how early Christians both understood the significance of life and death and confidently looked





forward to the hope of eternal life in the world to come, made possible by their faith in Jesus.

The Latin inscription, borne by two winged victories on the lid of the sarcophagus, reads: IULIA LATRONILLA CMF IN PACE DEPOSITA XII KAL SEPT VIXIT ANN XLVI M VIIII DIES XXVIIII 'Julia Latronilla, a woman most dear to our memory, was buried on August 21 and (rests) in peace. She lived forty-six years, nine months, twenty-nine days.'

For Julia and other early Christians, life and death formed part of a cycle, moving from the weight of sin inherited upon birth by every mortal, which is only increased during the individual's progression through this corrupt world and which can only be removed by divine redemption, to a new and pure beginning after death. This cycle from corruption to redemption is mirrored in the sequence of Old and New Testament scenes depicted on Julia's sarcophagus and on other sarcophagi of the Early Christian period.

The left panel of the sarcophagus chest, in the upper register, depicts God's allotment of labour to Adam and Eve after their fall from grace, symbolized by an ear of corn (representing man's cultivation of the fields) and a spindle (representing women's craftsmanship; see Gen. 3: 18-19); and by extension acknowledges humankind's inherent corruption. The lower register illustrates the miracle at Cana (John 2: 1-11), when Jesus turned water into wine, manifesting his power for the first time and thus displaying evidence of his divinity (Grabar, 1968: 97). On the right panel, the upper register portrays the miracle of the loaves of bread and fish (Mark 6: 41), offering the message of the multiplication of salvation and spiritual nourishment. The lower register illustrates the resurrection of the youth from Nain (Luke 7: 11-15), providing the hope of resurrection or rebirth in purity for all believers. The central panel consists of a clipeus with idealistic portraits of the couple in bas relief above a

christogram in a wreath. This is one of the earliest representations known of the christogram, or *chirho* — the first two letters of the word 'Christ' in Greek, combined to form a popular emblem. It is framed by symbols of the sun and the moon (alluding to the cosmic or universal power of Jesus), set above two Roman soldiers flanking a cross. This last scene represents the Resurrection, with the christogram in place of the figure of Jesus; the soldiers serve as witnesses (Matt. 28:11) to this event of cosmic significance.

On the lid of the sarcophagus is a pictorial frieze, with three scenes on each side of the inscription. Starting from the left, these are: Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Luke 19: 28–39), Zacchaeus in the tree (Luke 19: 1–10), and the healing of the woman suffering from a haemorrhage (Matt. 9: 20–22). To the right of the inscription are: the healing of the blind man (John 9: 1–39), Jesus' prophecy of Peter's denial (Matt. 26: 30–35), and on the far right, Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22: 1–14), interpreted by early Christians as a prefiguration of the Crucifixion.

Sarcophagi with similar motifs were produced from the second half of the fourth until the beginning of the fifth centuries. This example resembles the strigilated sarcophagi manufactured in Rome from the end of the second century onwards. Like its Roman counterparts, this piece is distinguished by its central *clipeus* and two lateral panels with two registers. It was made of two pieces of stone of different sizes, which were originally held together by metal brackets.

Published: Brenk, 1981a: 296-300, no. 277.

Clamer, 1987a: no. 150.

References: Grabar, 1967: 265, figs. 295–296; Deichmann, Bovini, and Brandenburg, 1967: vol. I: 33–45, 49, 56–59, 126, 127; vol. II: pl. 12, no. 39; pl. 13, nos. 40, 42; pl. 14, nos. 43–44; pl. 15, no. 45; pl. 16, no. 49; pl. 19, nos. 59, 61; Montaschar and Sintes, 1996: 157; Beckwith, 1979: 44, 46, no. 29.

CREATION OF EVE AND THE FALL

Created from Adam's rib to be his helper and companion, Eve was enticed by the serpent to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, and then persuaded Adam to taste the fruit too. As a punishment for this transgression, she was sentenced to the pangs of childbirth, a craving for her man, and subjection to him. Christian writers from the second century onwards adapted Paul's theme of the parallel between Adam and Jesus to parallel Eve with Mary. Both were virgins, but the former was credited with bringing forth disobedience, while the latter was honoured as a paragon of obedience who gave herself to become the mother of the saviour.

3 FRAGMENT FROM THE SARCOPHAGUS OF CYRIACA

Marble Italy

Beginning of the fourth century

Length: 59 cm; width: 27 cm; thickness: 6 cm

Soprintendenza Archeologica, delle Province di Napoli e Caserta, Museo Archeologica Nazionale di Napoli, inv. no. 6563

This fragment was originally part of the right side of a sarcophagus. The surviving piece bears the edge of the central medallion held by a *putto*, two scenes from the life of Adam and Eve: the creation of Eve (Gen. 2: 22) and the fall (Gen. 3: 1–13), and two figures from a scene depicting the adoration of the Magi (Matt. 2: 11).

The scene of the creation of Eve is rarely portrayed in funerary art. This composition is extraordinary, as God is shown modelling Eve as a sculptor would carve a statue. This image seems to have been inspired by classical depictions of the legend of Prometheus, the divine Titan, who made the first human beings.

The scene of the Fall is depicted in the usual way: Adam and Eve, hiding their genitals (see Gen. 3: 7), stand on either side of the Tree of Knowledge, with the snake twisted around its trunk.

The scene depicting the adoration of the Magi reflects the Gospel of Matthew (2: 1–12) who reports that three wise men (or magi) from the East came



to Jerusalem to search for the newborn king of the Jews. Herod the Great summoned them to his court in order to interrogate them about his 'rival'. They then proceeded to Bethlehem, since the High Priest and the scribes had told them that the Messiah would be born there, in King David's birthplace. Upon their arrival, they presented the baby Jesus with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The Magi's adoration of Jesus was interpreted by Christian theologians as an allusion to the later submission of the gentile world to the Jewish Messiah.

A Latin inscription on the upper edge of the coffin reads: ARIA CYRIACE + MATER FILIAE
'Aria to Cyriaca, a mother to her daughter'

Published: Gerke, 1940: 190–201; Kessler, 1979a: 460, no. 411; Wilpert, 1932: pl. 185.

ADAM AND EVE IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

4 BOWL DEPICTING ADAM, EVE, THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE TREE OF LIFE

Glass Cologne Fourth century

Height: 6 cm; diameter: 20 cm

Römisch-Germanisches Museum, Cologne, RGM N 340

The incised scene on this bowl depicts Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Eve stands to the left of the Tree of Knowledge, which, together with the Tree of Life, represented to the left of Adam, frames the picture. The snake coils around the Tree. Eve raises her right hand towards the tree in front of her, shields her pudenda with her left hand, and turns her head in the direction of Adam, who stands behind her, and also gestures towards the tree with his right hand. The bowl was broken in several pieces and

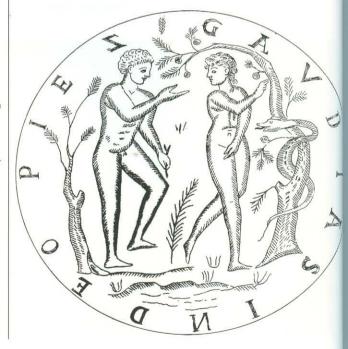
shows traces of restoration.

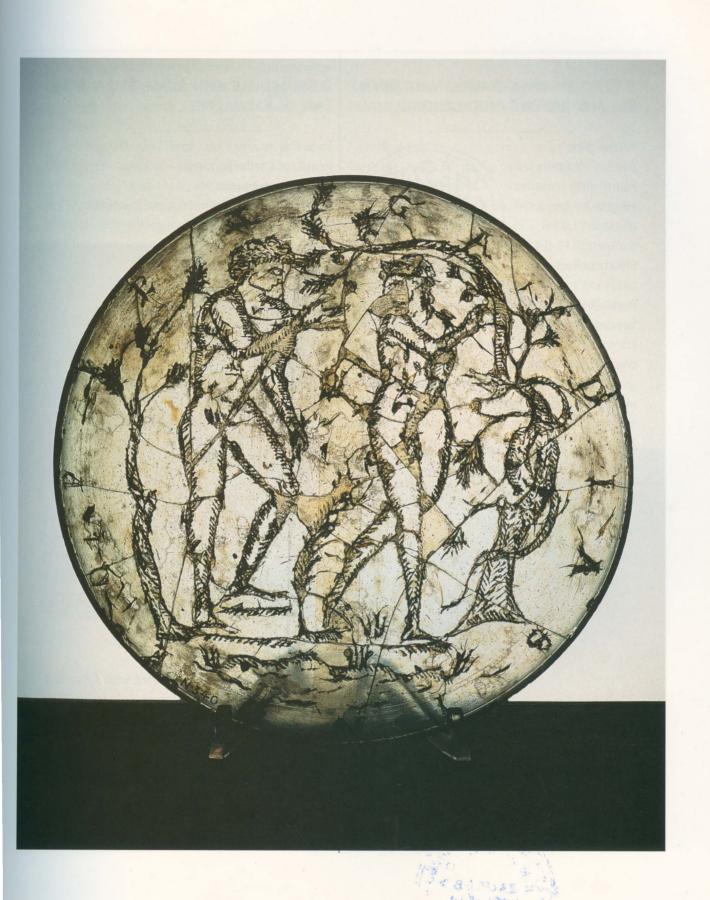
The edge of the bowl is inscribed in Latin and in Greek written with Latin letters: GAUDIAS IN DEO PIE Z(ESIS) Gaudias in Deo, $\Pi\iota\epsilon$, $\zeta\epsilon\sigma\eta\varsigma$ 'Rejoice in God, drink (and) you shall live'

The historian Lieselotte Kötzsche contends that this arrangement of the figures of Adam and Eve, standing between the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life, rather than on either side of one tree, is not the usual, canonical version. Nevertheless, a similar scene appears on the façade of a sarcophagus from Velletri. In fact, the symmetrical grouping of Adam and Eve, standing on either side of one tree, developed later in the fourth century as the standard depiction of the Fall (as on the sarcophagus of Cyriaca, no. 3).

Published: Cologne, 1965: 73-77, pl. 15, fig. 19; Cologne, 1967: No. D 100; Fremersdorf, 1967: 168-169, pl. 226; Kötzsche, 1979b: 422, no. 378. References: Harden, 1960: 71, fig. 35; 75, fig. 37;

Harden 1987: 229, no. 128.





5 GLASS PENDANT, STAMPED WITH ADAM, EVE AND THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

Yellow glass Eastern Mediterranean Fourth-fifth centuries Height: 2.5 cm; diameter: 1.9 cm;

thickness: 0.15-0.4 cm Private collection



A yellow glass pendant, still bearing its suspension loop, decorated with a stamped design depicting Adam and Eve standing on either side of the Tree of Knowledge. Both of them are naked. The outer arm of each figure hangs alongside the body, while the inner arm is extended towards the tree, around which twists the serpent. *Published:* Sternberg, 1992: 94, no. 654; pl. 37, no. 654.



6 SQUARE TILE WITH ADAM, EVE AND THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

Fired clay

Region of Carthage, Tunisia

Fifth-sixth centuries

Height: 26.1 cm; width: 26.8 cm; thickness: 2.9 cm

Private collection



A square terracotta tile, decorated with Adam and Eve standing next to the Tree of Knowledge. They stand with arms akimbo and their heads encircled by haloes. The gender of the figures is barely indicated, though the shorter hair of the figure on the right seems to indicate that this is Adam. The serpent is entwined around the tree, its head inclined towards Eve. Tiles were used to decorate the walls and probably the ceilings of early churches in North

Africa; they were produced by local artisans and were painted with a range of scenes depicting plants, animals, and events from the Old and New Testaments.

A similar tile discovered near Kairouan in Tunisia displays the names of Adam and Eve on the edge of the tile, and shows them with their arms covering their genitalia. This scene conveys the classical Christian reinterpretation that the sin of eating from the Tree was associated with the acquisition of knowledge about sex, which was thus understood as a shameful act, inextricably linked with mankind's fall from grace and corruption.

Unpublished

References: Ben Abed Ben Khader and Soren, 1987: 220-21, no. 84; Ferron and Pinard, 1952: 97-114, pl. IX; Vallet and Fantar, 1982: 187, no. 245.

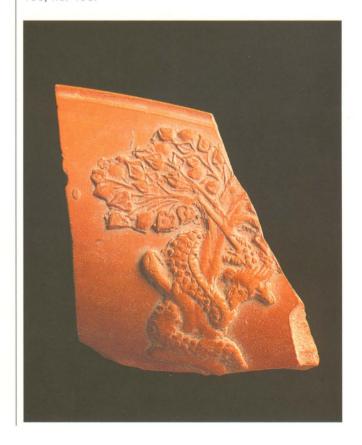
7 CHRISTIAN NORTH AFRICAN BOWL FRAGMENT, DEPICTING THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

Red slip ware Carthage, North Africa Fourth-fifth centuries

Height: 5.6 cm; width: 7 cm; thickness: 0.6-0.8 cm Private collection

A fragment from the rim of a bowl decorated with the Tree of Knowledge, with the serpent encircling the trunk. The leaves and branches of the Tree are shown in naturalistic detail, as are the serpent's scales. *Unpublished*

References: Hayes, 1972: 217, no. 44; Garbsch and Overbeck, 1989: 117, nos. 50–51; Saguí and Tortorici, 1987: 174, no. 156; Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 104–105, no. 405.



THE FALL OF ADAM

The story of the Fall of Adam has undergone farreaching transformations. Originally, God's command to Adam to refrain from eating the fruit of the tree of Knowledge was a test of free will, which ended in failure — Adam fell because of his disobedience, yielding to temptation of his own free will. Later theologians, both Jewish and Christian, linked this transgression to sexuality, symbolized by Eve, although in the account in Genesis the Fall is not sexual in nature and the link between sin and sex is never made.

8 CHRISTIAN NORTH AFRICAN BOWL FRAGMENT, WITH ADAM AND THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

A fragment from the central part of a bowl, showing a bearded and naked Adam. He covers his genitals with a fig leaf, which he holds in his right hand. His left arm is raised and his hand is open. His head is turned to the left. To the right of the figure of Adam is a fragment of the Tree of Knowledge, showing branches and leaves (see reconstruction in drawing). The centre of the bowl is engraved with a double circle. *Unpublished*

References: Hayes, 1972: 172; Saguí and Tortorici, 1987: 174, no. 156.

Red slip ware
Carthage, North Africa
Fourth-fifth centuries
Length: 10.5 cm; width: 5.7 cm;

thickness: 0.3-0.5 cm Private collection



9 OIL LAMP, DECORATED WITH ADAM (OR EVE) AND THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

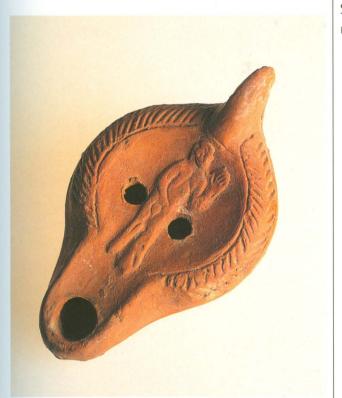
Red slip ware Carthage, North Africa Fourth-fifth centuries

Height: 5.8 cm; length: 12.8 cm; width: 8.3 cm

Private collection

The lamp, which has a handle, is decorated on the rim with palm branches. In the centre of the discus is the figure of Adam, hiding his nakedness. He covers his genitals with a fig leaf clutched in his right hand. His left arm is raised, with the hand open. His head is turned to the left.

The figure is not well executed. Since he stands to the left of the Tree of Knowledge, he can be identified as Adam, on the basis of the usual arrangement of this scene in early Christian



iconography. However, the iconography is not rigid, and there are examples of scenes showing Eve on the left of the Tree, including a tile found at Henchir Naja south of Kairouan in Tunisia, North Africa, and an early fifth-century silver flagon from Traprain Law, East Lothian, Scotland. Thus the figure shown on the lamp could be Eve. In fact the gender of the figure is ambiguous: its hair is fairly long, it does not seem to be bearded, and the belly seems to be rounded rather than muscular.

To the left and the right of the figure are two filling holes. The nozzle is small, with a large central channel.

Unpublished

References: Barbera and Petriaggi, 1993: 390, no. 413; Hayes, 1972: 172; Hayes, 1980: 66-67, nos. 281-282; 192, pl. 34, nos. 281-282; Saguí and Tortorici, 1987: 174, no. 156.

Similar iconography of Adam: Kessler, 1979a: 460, no. 411; Kötzsche, 1979b: 422, no. 378.

Similar iconography of Eve: Kötzsche, 1979c: 431, no. 389; Vallet and Fantar, 1982: 187, no. 245.



NOAH

וַיַּרָא ה' כִּי רַבָּה רָעַת הָאָדָם בְּאָרֶץ וְכְל־יֵצֶּר מַחְשְׁבֹת לִבּוֹ רַק רַע כְּל־הַיּוֹם ... וְנֹחַ מָצְא חֵן בָּמֵינֵי ה': (בראשית וַ 5, 8) בָּמֵינֵי ה': (בראשית וַ 5, 8)

'Ιδών δὲ Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ὅτι ἐπληθύνθησαν αἱ κακίαι τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ πᾶς τις διανοεῖται ἐν τῆ καρδία αὐτοῦ ἐπιμελῶς ἐπὶ τὰ πονηρὰ πάσας τας ἡμέρας ... Νωε δὲ εῦρεν χάριν ἐναντίον Κυρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ. (ΓΕΝΕΣΙΣ 6: 5, 8)

VIDEM AUTEM DEUS QUOD MULTA MALITIA HOMINUM ESSET IN TERRA ET CUNCTA COGITATIO CORDIS INTENTA ESSET AD MALUM OMNI TEMPORE ... NOE VERO INVENIT GRATIAM CORAM DOMINO. (GENESIS 6: 5, 8)

The Lord saw how great was man's wickedness on earth, and how every plan devised by his mind was nothing but evil all the time ... But Noah found favour with the Lord. (Genesis 6: 5, 8)

10 BOWL WITH BIBLICAL SCENES

Blue gold glass Cologne 326 CE Length: 8.6 cm; diameter: 11.4 cm Römisch-Germanisches Museum, Cologne, RGM Glas 991

The circular pattern was first cut into the interior of the bowl, and a thin gold foil was then attached to the outside, on which the decoration was incised. The gold was then fused onto the glass by repeated heating. In contrast to the usual practice, no second layer of glass was applied to cover the gold foil; as a result most of the foil has been lost.

The sides of the hemispherical bowl bear four large medallions, each framed by a floral band; two of the bands are composed of vine leaves, and two of olive leaves. A fifth, smaller medallion, surrounded by a plain band, is framed by four spandrels with palmettes.

Each medallion depicts a scene from the Old Testament. The first medallion, framed by olive leaves, shows Noah in the Ark (Gen. 8: 7-11). Noah appears as an orant, a conventionally depicted Christian worshipper of the Roman period, inside the ark, which is shown as a large open chest. At the top left appears the dove with the olive branch, and, below it, the raven, which is pecking out the eye of a drowned cow, shown upside down. The art historian Joseph Gutmann confirms that the raven's action does occasionally appear in iconography; the episode has its roots in Jewish *midrashim* and Christian legends. A similar image of the raven can be seen in the fresco at the Basilica of San Paolo fuori le Mura, in Rome.

The second medallion, framed by vine leaves, shows Moses striking the rock (Num. 20: 11). Moses stands on the right of the rock, and wears a *pallium*, a wide mantle worn by Roman men. Three Israelites



kneel to drink the water that flows from the rock. To the right of Moses, and above him to the left, are two trees with leaves, framing the scene.

The third medallion, also surrounded by olive leaves, shows Daniel dressed in a *dalmatica*, in the lions' den (Dan. 6: 17–24), flanked by two lions. Like Noah, Daniel appears as an orant.

The fourth medallion, like the medallion at the bottom of the bowl, shows scenes from Jonah's life. It is framed with vine leaves, and is divided into two registers: the lower one shows the sea monster casting up the unwilling prophet (Jonah 2: 1), while the upper register shows Jonah resting under the gourd vine as he waits in vain for Nineveh to be destroyed.

The medallion on the bottom shows three sailors on a ship with furled sails and a long steering oar; they are throwing Jonah to the sea monster, lying in wait below.

The upper spandrels between the medallions contain four small medallions with portraits of the four sons of Constantine the Great: Crispus, Constantius II, Constantine II and Constans. Crispus, the eldest son, was murdered by his father in 327 CE, and suffered damnatio memoriae (literally 'damnation of memory', meaning that his memory was condemned to be blotted out); this was because

he had had an affair with his stepmother, Fausta, according to contemporary sources — the historians Eutropius (who wrote his *Breviarium ab urbe condita* in the reign of Valens [364–378]) and Sextus Aurelius Victor (who wrote an abbreviated history, the *Caesares*, in ca. 360). The bowl must thus be dated to 326 CE at the latest; it was probably manufactured to commemorate Constantine I's Vicennalia, his twentieth anniversary as Augustus. The bowl was manufactured either at Cologne (Colonia Claudia Ara

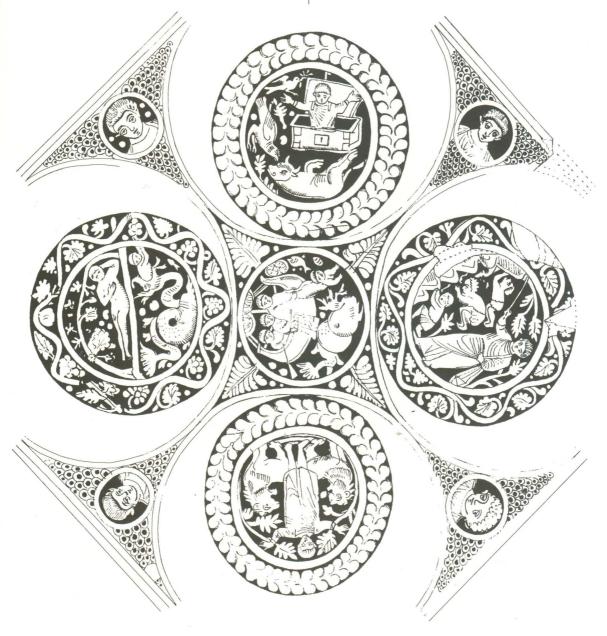
Agrippiniensis), where it was found, or at Rome, where Constantine celebrated the Vicennalia.

The hollow-cast bowl has been broken several times and glued back together; a small part of the edge has been restored.

Published: Cologne, 1965: 70-73, figs. 17-18; Cologne, 1967: no. D 101; Fremersdorf, 1967: 203-207, pls. 285-293; Kötzsche, 1979a: 420-421, no. 377.

References: Gutmann, 1977: 63-71;

Klauser, 1961: 180.



CITY-COINS FROM APAMEA KIBOTOS, DEPICTING NOAH'S ARK

Apamea Kibotos was a Greek polis, or city-state in Phrygia, in Asia Minor (modern Turkey). The word kibôtos in Greek means 'chest'. Its use as a 'surname' for the city of Apamea differentiated it from two other cities of the same name in the region. It has been suggested that the use of the word 'chest' refers to the city's commercial importance, since it stood at the junction of several trade routes, and goods brought along the caravan routes from the East arrived here, to be packed in chests and forwarded to ports such as Ephesus or Pergamum. A more common interpretation explains the word kibôtos as meaning 'ark', referring to the local Jewish community's tradition that the mountain above the city was Mount Ararat, on which Noah's Ark came to rest (Gen. 8: 4). This tradition probably dates back to the founding of the city in the third century BCE, when a Jewish community developed together with the city. This tradition is also known from local Christian Syriac sources. The city's most celebrated relic was a fragment of wood believed to have come from the original ark.

This type of bronze coin was minted under various emperors: Septimus Severus (193-211 CE), Alexander Severus (222-235), Gordianus III (238-244), Philip the Arab (244-249), and Trebonianus Gallus (251-253). Like most other Greek cities, Apamea closed down its mint early in the second half of the third century.

On the obverse of these coins appears the bust of the emperor, Philip the Arab or Trebonianus Gallus, looking to the right; Philip wears a radiate crown, while Trebonianus has a laurel crown, and they both wear body armour and a *paludamentum*, a Roman officer's military cloak.

On the reverse of the coin from the reign of Philip the Arab, Noah and his wife appear twice: to the right, they are standing within an open chest-like ark, bearing the inscription $N\Omega E$, 'Noah' (Gen. 6: 14). On the right of the chest is the dove, back from its second expedition with an olive branch in its claws (not in its beak, as in Gen. 8: 11). On the left Noah and his wife are shown standing outside the ark, facing left and raising their right hands (Gen. 8: 18).

The coin minted during the reign of Trebonianus Gallus shown in the exhibition depicts two scenes of Noah and his wife on the reverse. One scene shows the couple standing within an open-lidded, chestlike ark, with the dove perched on the right-hand edge of the lid. To the left, the dove returns from its second journey with an olive branch held in its claws (not in its beak). The scene that appears on the reverse repeats that depicted on the coin minted under Philip the Arab. The coin from the reign of Trebonianus Gallus resembles those from the reign of Alexander Severus, with only a few differences: the scene is reversed from left to right, Noah and his wife are depicted in the act of opening the lid of the ark, and only Noah raises his right hand, as his wife stands by him.

The rarity of the coins could be explained by the fact that they were probably struck only periodically to commemorate the national Panegyrian Games held at Apamea.

References: Avi-Yonah, 1981: 186-190. Goodenough, 1953: II: 119-120; III: fig. 700; Head, 1911: 665-667; Kindler, 1971: 24-32, pl. V; Meshorer, 1981: 38-39; Narkiss, 1979: 383, no. 350.

11 CITY-COIN FROM APAMEA KIBOTOS, MINTED UNDER PHILIP THE ARAB

Bronze

Apamea Kibotos, Asia Minor 244-249 CE

Diameter: 33.2-34.5 mm; weight: 21.05 gm

Eretz Israel Museum K 2920

The inscription in Greek on the obverse mentions the emperor Philip the Arab:

ΑΥΤ(οκράτωρ) Κ(αῖσαρ) Ἰουλ(ιος) ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΣ ΑΥΓ(ουστος)

'Imperator Caesar Iulius Philippus Augustus'

On the reverse:

ΕΠ(ὶ) ΜΑ(ρκου) (Α)ΥΡ(ελιου) ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ Β(ασιλέως) ΑΡΧΙ(έρεως) ΑΠΑΜΕΩΝ '(Minted) at the time of Marcus Aurelius Alexander, King [honorific title], High Priest of the citizens of Apamea'

The ark bears the inscription $N\Omega(E)$ 'Noah'. *Published:* Ziffer, 1998: 58*, fig. 29.

12 CITY-COIN FROM APAMEA KIBOTOS, MINTED UNDER TREBONIANUS GALLUS

Bronze

Apamea Kibotos, Asia Minor

251-253 CE

Diameter: 3.7 cm; thickness: 0.3 cm

Private collection



The inscription in Greek on the obverse is of Trebonianus Gallus:

ΑΥΤ(οκράτωρ) Γ(αιος) ΟΥΕΙΒ(ιος) ΤΡΕΒ(ονιάνος) ΓΑΛΛΟΣ ΣΕΒ(άστος)

'Imperator (Caesar) G(aius) Vibius Trebonianus Gallus Augustus'

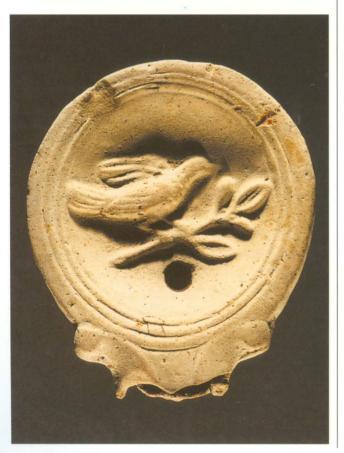
The reverse is the same as that of no. 11. *Unpublished*

13 PAGAN ROMAN LAMP DEPICTING A DOVE WITH AN OLIVE BRANCH

Clay Italy Second half of the first-early second centuries Height: 2.3 cm; diameter: 6 cm

Fretz Israel Museum MHP 33161

An Italian volute lamp. The ware is creamy-rose. The low base ring is marked off by grooves, and there is a wide rim band and a broad concave top with three concentric ridges. There is no handle and the nozzle is broken. The lamp is flat-topped, with small raised and tilted double volutes against the rim; and a small filling hole.



The dove shown in profile on the discus faces right; it seems to have an olive branch in its claws (not in its beak, as in Gen. 8: 11), or to be perching on the branch. The dove in this case is probably the emblematic bird of the goddess Aphrodite, or Venus, and thus is not connected to any biblical episode.

At this period Christians did not create explicitly Christian art; rather, they selected appropriate examples from the available range of images and adapted them. Thus they used earlier images, such as the Good Shepherd, to represent Jesus, and the dove for the Holy Spirit, endowing them with Christian significance. The Gospel of Mark states that the Holy Spirit descended at the baptism of Jesus in the form of a dove (Mark 1: 9–10), thus leading to the adoption of doves as symbols of the divine presence. Lamps bearing this motif would therefore have become popular among early Christians, whether they were made by pagan or Christian craftsmen.

Published: Ziffer, 1998: 57, fig. 73.

References: Goethert-Polaschek, 1997: 213, nos. M 202, M 203a, M 203b, M 204, M 205; Hayes, 1980: 48, no. 219; 180, pl. 22, no. 219.

14 RING FRAGMENT DEPICTING A DOVE WITH AN OLIVE BRANCH

Bronze

North Africa

Sixth century

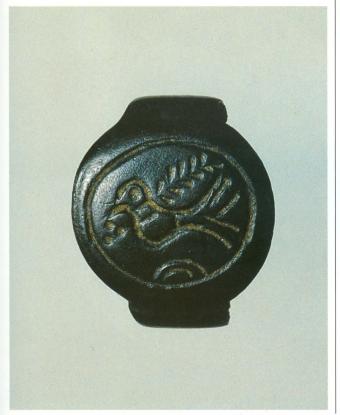
Diameter: 1.5 cm

Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem 972

A bronze ring bezel decorated with the image of a dove holding an olive branch in its beak (Gen. 8: 11). Beneath the dove, a small arc represents the rainbow which marked God's covenant with Noah (Gen. 9:13). The bezel is framed with a circular border.

Published: Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 90-91, no.

334; Ziffer, 1998: 54.



15 Lamp decorated with a dove holding an olive branch

Red slip ware

Tunisia, North Africa

Fourth-fifth centuries

Width: 12 cm, length: 15 cm

Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum (Flagellatio)



The lamp has an almost circular body, with two nozzles pierced by large wick holes. It is deep-bodied, with rounded sides, a flat rim and a slightly concave circular discus. There are small ridges round the rim and discus, and a flattened disc-like vertical handle with a reflector. The channel around the discus is decorated by a pattern of concentric circles. The discus is ornamented with a dove, with opened wings, holding an olive branch in its beak (Gen. 8: 11). There are two small filling holes, one near the beak and the other near the tail of the dove. The circular handle is decorated with a flat bearded human head, crowned by a diadem.

Unpublished

References: Barbera and Petriaggi, 1993: 356, no. 1; 385, no. 323; Ennabli, 1976: 129, no. 558, pl. XXIX; 132, no. 571, pl. XXX; 134, no. 587, pl. XXXI;

Tortorella, 1987: 125, 132.

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC



וו וָהַאֵלהִים נָפַה אַת־אַבְרָהַם וַיֹּאמֵר אֵלָיו ... אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הָנֵּנִי: וַיֹּאמֶר קַח־נָא אֵת־בִּנִךּ אֵת־ יִחִידְדְּ אֲשֶׁר־אָהַבְתָּ אֵת־יִצְחָק וַלֵּדְ־לִּדְּ אֵל־אָרֵץ הַמַריַה וָהַעַלֵהוּ שָׁם לעלָה עַל אַחַר הַהָּרִים אֲשֶׁר אֹמַר אֵלֵיך: (בראשית כב 2-1)

Καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα ὁ Θεὸς ἐπείραζεν τὸν ΄ Αβραάμ καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτόν΄ Αβρααμ΄ Αβρααμ, ὁ δὲ εἶπεν Ίδοὺ ἐγώ. Καὶ εἶπεν λάβε τὸν υἱόν σου τὸν ἀγαπητόν ὅν ήγάπησας τὸν Ἰσαακ καὶ πορεύθητι εἰς τὴν γῆν τὴν ύψηλὴν καὶ ἀνένεγκον αὐτὸν ἐκεῖ εἰς ὁλοκάρπωσιν ἐφ' ἕν τῶν ὀρέων ὧν ἄν σοι εἴπω. (ΓΕΝΕΣΙΣ 22: 1-2)

... TEMPTAVIT DEUS ABRAHAM ET DIXIT AD EUM ABRAHAM ILLE RESPONDIT ADSUM AIT EI TOLLE FILIUM TUUM UNIGENITUM QUEM DILIGIS ISAAC ET VADE IN TERRAM VISIONIS ATQUE OFFER EUM IBI HOLOCAUSTUM SUPER UNUM MONTIUM QUEM MONSTRAVERO TIBI. (GENESIS 22: 1-2)

... And God put Abraham to the test and said to him, 'Abraham', and he said, 'Here I am'. And He said, 'Take your son, your only son whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, where you are to offer him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you'. (Genesis 22: 1-2)

ABRAHAM AND THE THREE HEAVENLY VISITORS

By the terebinths of Mamre, three messengers appeared to the patriarch Abraham, who entertained them; they informed him that a son would be born to him and to Sarah (Gen. 18). The three messengers were interpreted as the three Persons of the Trinity by the early Christians, turning the incident into a theophany experienced by Abraham, which made this scene particularly popular. Another aspect of the scene was Abraham's hospitality, which was proverbial. Mamre was a place of pilgrimage for Christians, and the emperor Constantine built a church there, within the enclosure built by Herod for a pagan cult site for the Edomites.

16 FESTIVAL CAKE MOULD

Limestone

Vicinity of Jerusalem, Eastern Roman province of Palaestina Prima

Fifth century

Diameter: 14 cm; width: 3.5 cm

University of Toronto, Malcove Collection,

inv. no. M. 82.271

This double-sided mould is a characteristic object of pilgrimage art. The tenth-century historian Sozomenos records that Christians, Jews and Phoenicians came to Mamre every year for the





harvest festival, during which ceremonial cakes were thrown into Abraham's well. This mould may have been used to make such cakes, though according to the art historian Sheila Campbell, its shape might indicate that it could have been used to produce medallions for Eulogia flasks, made specifically in Mamre for pilgrims.

One face depicts the three angels sent to visit Abraham and Sarah on the plain of Mamre. The iconography of the angels is similar to that of emperors: they are beardless, wear the Late Roman pallium or chlamys, and are seated behind a three-legged table, in the middle of the scene, under the oak of Mamre, with a birdcage hanging on the left from its branches. The bird symbolizes the Holy Spirit. Each angel holds a cup in his right hand. The central angel, representing God (or Jesus, as the second Person of the Trinity), raises his right hand, announcing the miraculous conception of Isaac; his companions point their staves at the calf and Abraham's well below.

The Greek inscription reads: EILENS MOI OI AFFELOI ϵ llews mor of $\dot{a}\gamma\gamma\epsilon$ lor 'May the angels look propitiously upon me'

In the lower part of the circle (exergue), Abraham and Sarah prepare a meal.

Rather surprisingly, the other side of the mould depicts an enthroned goddess, flanked by four sheaves of grain (?). She wears a robe decorated with stars, and her head is covered by the mantle of the robe. She wears a *polos* hat decorated with a star. Her left hand seems to touch her ear, while her right hand drops down at her side. Under her right hand or falling down from it seem to be five or six round objects (perhaps, cakes).

An inscription in Greek at her foot reads: $\Delta EXOME\ XAIP\Omega N\ THN\ O\Upsilon PANIAN$

 $\Delta \dot{\epsilon}$ χομ $\dot{\epsilon}$ χαῖρων τὴν 'Ουράνιαν 'I receive, rejoicing, the heavenly one'

Who is this figure? A pagan goddess, such as Astarte, Atargatis, or Aphrodite Urania? According to the art historian Margaret Frazer, in its pose and dress the figure resembles Aphrodite of Afga on Mt. Lebanon, as depicted on local city coins. Perhaps she is actually the Virgin Mary, depicted as a pagan goddess, although the iconography of the Virgin was well defined by the fifth century and did not include any images like this one. Maybe it reflects the coexistence of several cults at Mamre, a situation that shocked Constantine's mother-in-law when she toured the Holy Land looking for holy sites (Sozomenos, Historia ecclesiastica 2. 4). However, we must keep in mind that in the fifth century, after the reign of the emperor Theodosius, when this mould was produced, all forms of official pagan cult were already forbidden. It thus seems probable that this figure is really the Virgin; in order to appeal to the local pagan population, her depiction deliberately preserved the clearly pagan iconography.

A possible connection between the obverse and the reverse could be the link between the annunciation of the birth of the child and the mother of the child whether she be Sarah or Mary. The inscription seems to be related to the annunciation of Jesus' birth.

Published: Frazer, 1979: 583-584, no. 522.

References: Du Mesnil Du Buisson, 1970: 108–111; Grabar, 1968: 114–116 (on symbolism); Grabar, 1966: 9–16 (on bird and cage).

17 DECORATIVE ROUNDEL DEPICTING THREE HOLY FIGURES

Textile Egypt

Eighth-tenth centuries

Diameter: 23.5 cm

Haifa Museum of Art, Inv. no. 6035

This Coptic tapestry depicts three holy figures, perhaps the three angels of Mamre. The figures are elaborately dressed, and appear on a red ground. Above them are two winged monsters flanking a human head. At the bottom are three human heads. The border contains floral and geometric motifs.

The warp is undyed linen, S-spun and Z-plied. The weft is made of coloured wool (red, brown, two shades of green, dark blue, light blue, ochre and yellow) and bleached linen.

Published: Baginski and Tidhar, 1980: 127, no. 188.



THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

In Jewish thought, this story conveys the supreme example of self-sacrifice in obedience to God's will, and is the symbol of Jewish martyrdom throughout the ages. In Hebrew, the story is know as the akedah or the 'binding' of Isaac. This scene was among the most frequent in early Christian art, and continued to be used after most other Old Testament scenes had been dropped from the Christian repertoire of images. Christians associated it with the actual sacrifice of another son, Jesus, coming to see the aborted sacrifice of Isaac as a precursor to the Crucifixion. The Sacrifice of Isaac provides one of the clearest examples of the way in which early Christians used events in the Old Testament as parallels to Jesus' Passion, creating a new interpretation of the original story in the light of later events. In support of this comparison, Christian theologians noted that both Isaac and Jesus underwent miraculous conceptions (Sarah bore Isaac at the age of ninety after a lifetime of barrenness); that Isaac carried the wood for his sacrifice just as Jesus carried his own cross; and that the journey to the sacrifice site at Mt. Moriah took three days, the same length of time between Jesus' death and his resurrection.

18 SAMARITAN LAMP DEPICTING THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

Fired clay

Neapolis (Shechem) region, Eastern Roman province of Palaestina Prima

Fourth century

Height: 3.4 cm; length: 8.4 cm; diameter of the

medallion: 3.7 cm Private collection The nozzle of the lamp is framed by a ladder motif, perhaps suggesting a section of the monumental staircase leading to the Samaritan Temple, erected by the emperor Hadrian on Mount Gerizim. The lower part of the body is decorated with a wide tree trunk, partly covered by herringbone pattern, growing from a vase. In the centre there is an unidentified addition, maybe a stylized tree.

On the nozzle appears the Sacrifice of Isaac, on three levels: at the lowest level is the altar, shown as an elongated stone; on the middle level there is a bundle, with an arm extended along it, representing Isaac; and at the top level appears a rectangular, fingerless hand, symbolizing God. To the left, on the shoulder of the lamp, is Abraham's slaughtering knife. A ladder is shown below the knife. Below the main scene, on the lamp's right shoulder, one can make out a stylized four-legged animal (the ram), facing another, larger, altar below, with four legs and with flames burning on its top.

The pairing of Mount Gerizim and the Sacrifice of Isaac is not accidental. According to the Samaritans, Isaac was sacrificed on the top of Mount Gerizim, and not on Mount Moriah, as recorded in Genesis 22: 2.



Except for Isaac's schematic body, the sacrifice is represented only by means of artefacts. Samaritan iconography at this period was stricter than Jewish art in its avoidance of the representation of human figures. The Talmud emphasizes that at this period the Samaritans, under the leadership of Baba Rabbah, were much more reliable from the religious point of view than before.

According to the Hellenistic historian Alexander Polyhistor, Abraham was entertained by Melchizedek, the king and priest of the temple of 'Argarizin', clearly Mount Gerizim. Polyhistor attributed this information to an anonymous writer, once identified as the Jewish historian Eupolemus (second century BCE), but now securely identified as an anonymous contemporary Samaritan writer, known as Pseudo-Eupolemus. *Published:* Sussman, 1998: 183–189.

19 CITY-COIN OF NEAPOLIS DEPICTING THE TEMPLE OF ZEUS YPSISTOS

Bronze

Neapolis (Shechem) region, Eastern Roman province of Syria-Palaestina

Minted during the reign of Philip the Arab,

244-249 CE

Diameter: 2.8 cm; thickness: 0.3 cm Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem 2618

Gift of Jonathan H. Kagan

On the obverse is depicted the bust of the emperor Philip the Arab, facing right, wearing a radiate crown and a *paludamentum* (military cloak), with the Latin inscription:

IMP(erator) C(aesar) M(arcus) IVL(ius) PHILIPPUS AVG(ustus)

'Imperator Caesar Augustus Marcus Iulius Philippus'

On the reverse is depicted the temple on Mount Gerizim, built by the emperor Hadrian and dedicated

to Zeus Ypsistos ('the highest god', perhaps modelled on the Hebrew epithet *el elyon* אל עליון); the temple is surrounded by a wreath supported by an eagle, symbol of Rome, facing left. On the left stands the god Marsias, shown in right profile, playing the syrinx (panpipes) and carrying a wineskin on his shoulder. The Latin inscription reads:

COL(onia) (Sergia) NEAP(olis) 'Colony Sergia Neapolis'

During the reign of Philip the Arab (244–249), Neapolis became a Roman colony; hence the Latin rather than Greek inscriptions on the coins. In the second and third centuries CE the Samaritan cult became syncretistic, merging with other religions, and the Roman colonists introduced other cults in Shechem, such as the cult of Marsias, which was prominent in the city's forum.

Unpublished

References: Hill, 1914: 64, no. 117, pl. VI, no. 17; Meshorer, 1984: 51, 115, no. 141; Rosenberger, 1977: 17, no. 76.

20 NORTH AFRICAN BOWL FRAGMENT DEPICTING THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

Red slip ware

Carthage, North Africa

Fourth-fifth centuries

Height: 5.5 cm; width: 6.4 cm; thickness: 0.3-0.5 cm

Private collection

A fragment of a bowl, decorated with a scene depicting the Sacrifice of Isaac, which closely resembles the scene on no. 21.

Unpublished

21 NORTH AFRICAN BOWL DEPICTING THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

Red slip ware Tunisia, North Africa 350-400 CE

Diameter: 17.9 cm; height: 5.3 cm

University of Toronto, Malcove Collection,

inv. no. M.82.359

The bowl was broken in several pieces, but nothing is missing. Lines are incised around the rim and in the centre.

The main subject of the bowl is the Sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22: 1–19). Abraham is portrayed bearded and wearing a colobium, which leaves his shoulder bare and right arm free. He is facing left, away from the altar, and raises his sword, held in his right hand, to strike Isaac; his left hand rests on Isaac's head. Isaac, kneeling with his hands tied behind his back, is bending over a small rectangular altar, which resembles Roman examples. Three animals are scattered around the bowl: a ram, linked to the biblical scene, a striding lion, and a bear in a defensive posture with open jaws.

A strong pagan flavour pervades the scene. The figure of Abraham is reminiscent of the fishermen shown on North African mosaics, and is borrowed from the Hellenistic world. The kneeling victim clearly belongs to Hellenistic (or pagan) iconography, being dressed in a sleeveless *chiton* and crowned with a diadem. In addition, there is no depiction of God's hand, a feature which often appears in representations of this scene. Is it possible that this depiction actually represented an episode from pagan myth, such as the return of Idomeneus to Crete, rather than the biblical story of the Sacrifice of Isaac?

The lion and the bear also may be remnants of circus representations, quite common on earlier



Christian North African vessels. A similar Christian North African bowl, in a private collection, shows a less pagan-influenced scene with the addition of the hand of God.

Published: Lucchesi-Palli, 1979: 422-423, no. 379. References: Garbsch and Overbeck, 1989: 119, nos. 53-57; Geischer, 1967: 127-144; Hayes, 1972: 217; Saguí, and Tortorici, 1987: 174; Vermaseren and Van Essen, 1965: 369, no. 645, pls. 87, 10; Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 104-105, no. 402.

22 Mould with the Sacrifice of Isaac and the Good Shepherd

Gypsum North Africa Fifth century (?)

Length: 14.10 cm; height: 8. 2 cm

Römisch-Germanisches Museum, Cologne,

REM KL 605





The mould fragment depicts the Sacrifice of Isaac. Abraham, facing left, bearded and wearing a colobium, appears on the right, brandishing a long knife in his right hand; his left hand presses down Isaac's head. Isaac is shown naked, kneeling with his hands tied behind his back, and bending over a small rectangular altar.

The other side of the fragment depicts the Good Shepherd. He is shown as a youth with curly hair, wearing a short low-waisted and belted tunic and a cloak. As he strides along he grasps the legs of the ram that he carries on his shoulders.

Published: La Baume and Salomonson, 1976: 156, no. 609.

References: Garbsch and Overbeck, 1989: 119, nos. 53-57; Hayes, 1972: 217; Lucchesi-Palli, 1979: 422-423, no. 379; Saguí and Tortorici, 1987: 174; Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 104-105, no. 402.

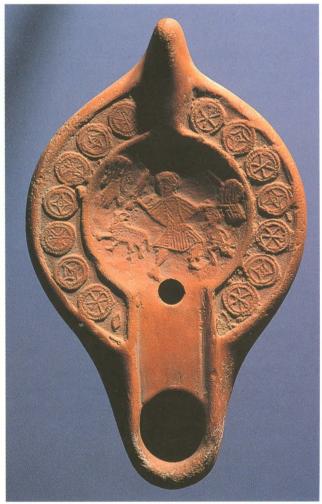
23 NORTH AFRICAN LAMP DEPICTING THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

Red slip ware Carthage, North Africa Fourth-fifth centuries

Height: 5 cm; length: 14.0 cm; width: 8.5 cm

Private collection

The discus of this Christian North African lamp is decorated with the Sacrifice of Isaac: Abraham brandishes a long knife in his right hand; his left hand rests on Isaac's head as he kneels in front of



Abraham. On the left appear a ram and the hand of God. The discus is surrounded by an alternating pattern of circle-framed rosettes and christograms. *Unpublished*

References: Barbera and Petriaggi, 1993: 358, no. 8; 376, no. 211; Ennabli, 1976: 43, nos. 14, 15, pl. l; Hayes, 1972: 217, 224, 228; Saguí and Tortorici, 1987: 174; Tortorella, 1987: 126, 131–132.

24 NORTH AFRICAN LAMP FRAGMENT, DEPICTING THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

Red slip ware Carthage, North Africa Fourth-fifth centuries

Length: 9.7 cm; diameter: 5.0 cm; width: 7.1 cm;

thickness: 0.4-0.7 cm Private collection

This fragment is decorated with a scene very similar to no. 23.

Unpublished

25 NORTH AFRICAN LAMP MOULD, DECORATED WITH THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

Gypsum Carthage, North Africa Fourth-fifth centuries

Length: 19.8 cm; width: 14.0 cm;

thickness: 3.8–4.4 cm Private collection

A lamp mould used to produce the type of lamp described above (nos. 23, 24). Although the discus is somewhat worn, the figure of Abraham brandishing his knife can clearly be seen, as can the decoration around the discus.

Unpublished

26 NORTH AFRICAN LAMP, DEPICTING A LAMB

Red slip ware Carthage, North Africa Fourth-fifth centuries

Height: 5.2 cm; length: 14.1 cm; width: 8.4 cm

Private collection

Lamp of the same type as no. 23. The discus depicts a lamb with a christogram inscribed in a circle on its head. The lamb was a conventional symbol for the Sacrifice of Isaac, and hence also stood for the Crucifixion, since the early Christians regarded Isaac as a prefiguration of Jesus (see above). The discus is surrounded by a pattern of alternate concentric



circles, filled with dot fringe pattern, and concentric triangles. Near the nozzle the pattern terminates in palm branches on each side.

Unpublished

References: Barbera and Petriaggi, 1993: 357, no. 7; 359, no. 18; 369, no. 110; Ennabli, 1976: 112, no. 448, pl. XXII; Hayes, 1972: 223, 225; Tortorella, 1987: 125–126, 133.

27 HANDLE IN THE SHAPE OF ABRAHAM IN THE ACT OF SACRIFICING ISAAC

Bronze
Western Mediterranean
Ca. sixth century

Height: 8.9 cm; width: 5.9 cm; thickness: 4.8 cm

Private collection

Bronze figurine, perhaps the handle of vessel, depicting Abraham in the act of sacrificing Isaac. Abraham is shown wearing a short belted tunic, with closely cropped hair; he looks upwards, to his right. His right hand is missing, and his left hand rests on the kneeling Isaac's head. Isaac is blindfolded, and his hands are tied behind him. The two figures rest on a semi-circular base. Similar bronze figurines, representing the Good Shepherd, and appearing on



items of horse harness, have been found in Spain, and attest to the use of religious imagery in a secular environment. This representation of the Sacrifice of Isaac may have been used in a similar fashion, or perhaps as a handle attached to a vessel.

Published: Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 109, no. 414. References: De Palol, n.d.: 338, 340, no. 177.

28 ENGLISH RING BEZEL DEPICTING THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

Silver

Bury St. Edmund's, Suffolk, Britain

Ca. fourth century

Diameter: 1.1 cm; thickness 0.1 cm

Private collection

A round silver ring bezel depicting the Sacrifice of Isaac. The figure of Abraham in the centre dominates the scene. He wears a long gown, belted at the waist but flaring widely just below the knee. He faces left, and his right hand is stretched over Isaac's head. Isaac is depicted on the far right of the ring, kneeling, with his left hand raised behind him. The ram is depicted on the extreme left of the ring, just below Abraham's raised left arm and looking back towards him. The hand of God, without fingers, seems to appear at the top right. The altar does not appear. *Published:* Hattat, 1989: 444, 445 no. 105.

References: Bonner, 1950: 222, 226, 307; 310-311, no. 343; pl. XVIII.

29 EASTERN AMULET DEPICTING THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

Limonite/onyx Provenance unknown; probably Eastern Mediterranean Fifth century (?) Height: 2.3 cm; width: 1.8 cm

Private collection

This rectangular amulet, with a suspension hole in the middle of its top, depicts the Sacrifice of Isaac. Abraham dominates the scene, draped in a *pallium*; he stands in the centre of the pendant, with the sacrificial knife held in his right hand. He faces left, towards the hand of God, shown descending from the sky in the upper left corner. Below the hand of



God stands the ram, looking towards Abraham and tethered to a tree by a rope. To the right is Isaac, kneeling before Abraham with his hands tied behind his back. A horned altar with a flame burning in the middle can be seen above Isaac. Two stars are depicted on either side of the suspension hole.

Four lines of pseudo-Aramaic script are inscribed on the reverse of the pendant. The letters can be clearly read, although the meaning of the words is unknown. It may represent a different language written in Aramaic letters or even an esoteric code used to obscure their meaning. The inscription reads:

טאגלטא אלוילשיל שאלטא לכלאגלט

Published: Shanks, 1996: 31.

References: Bonner, 1950: 226, 307; 310-311, no.

343; pl. XVIII; Finney, 1995.



30 EASTERN AMULET DEPICTING THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

Limonite
Eastern Mediterranean
Fifth-sixth centuries
Height: 3.9 cm; widht: 3.3 cm
Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem 1156

An oval limonite amulet with a suspension hole at the top. A circular incised line runs around the edge, framing the picture on the obverse and the inscription on the reverse.

The obverse shows Abraham standing in the centre of the amulet, holding a long sword in his

raised right hand. His left hand rests on the back of Isaac, whose hands are tied behind him as he stands in front of the altar, depicted as a tall structure. The ram appears at the far left; at the upper right corner appears the hand of God, reaching down towards Abraham.

The reverse is covered with three fields of writing divided into two registers. The top register has four and half lines of a completely unintelligible Greek text while the bottom register is divided into two fields. In the right field are another four lines of indecipherable Greek, while in the left field is a mixture of magical signs and symbols.

Published: Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 80-81, no. 300a.

References: Bonner, 1950: 208-228; Finney, 1995.





31 EASTERN AMULET DEPICTING THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC AND DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

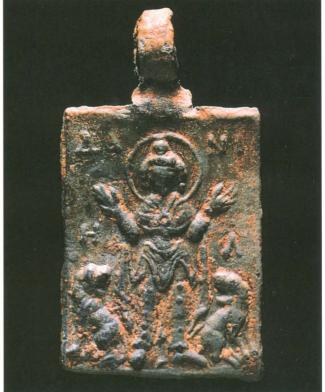
Lead
Eastern Mediterranean
Ca. sixth century
Length: 4.2 cm; width: 2.2 cm
Private collection

A lead plaque with a loop to suspend it at the top, depicting two scenes from the Bible: on the obverse, the Sacrifice of Isaac, and on the reverse, Daniel in the Lions' Den (Dan. 6: 17–24). Although originally thought to be of Jewish origin, the fact that both Daniel and Abraham are portrayed with what seem to be haloes around their heads may indicate that the source was an Eastern Roman (such as Palmyran)

or Christian motif. However, a few instances of haloes in Jewish art have been found, including one around the head of Abraham in the mosaic floor of the Beth Alpha synagogue in the Beth-Shean Valley and of David in the Gaza synagogue. The amulet could thus be of either Jewish or Christian origin.

On the obverse Abraham stands facing left, bearded and wearing a long gown, with a halo around his head; he bends his knees slightly and raises his sword to strike Isaac with his right hand, while resting his left hand on Isaac's head. Isaac, his hands tied behind his back, kneels on one knee in the bottom left corner of the plaque. The altar, bearing a flame, appears above him. God's hand can be seen in the upper left corner of the amulet. The ram stands behind Abraham, beneath a tall plant. It has been suggested that the latter represents a palm branch, like those that decorate the *akedah* scene in the Beth Alpha synagogue mosaic.





On the reverse, Daniel appears in a frontal pose, raising his hands in the orant posture. He is dressed like a Sassanian dignitary, with what may be a Phrygian cap on his curly hair, a medallion around his neck, an ornate tunic, trousers, and a cloak which covers his shoulders. His head too is surrounded by a halo. He is flanked by two lions, standing and facing him. An inscription in Greek reads:

 Δ ANIH Λ

(Δανιήλ)

Daniel

Unpublished

References: Bonner, 1950: 222, 226; 308-309, no. 332, pl. XVIII; 310-311, no. 343; pl. XVIII; Finney, 1995.

32 EASTERN AMULET DEPICTING THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

Bronze

Eastern Mediterranean (?)

Fifth-sixth centuries

Length: 5.0 cm; width: 3.1 cm

Private collection

The bronze amulet is rectangular with rounded corners, and has a suspension loop at the top. The obverse shows the Sacrifice of Isaac. Abraham is depicted in profile, facing left, on the right of the amulet; he has a beard and long hair, is dressed in a long gown, and appears to hold a long knife in his left hand. Isaac is shown to his father's left, kneeling with his hands tied behind the back, and facing Abraham. On the lower part of the amulet is a palm branch, with a lion (ram?) to its right.

An unintelligible Greek inscription frames the upper left and right sides and the top of the amulet. A christogram appears to the left of Isaac, perhaps as a substitute for the more usual hand of God. The christogram leaves no doubt that the amulet's owner was a Christian. The iconography is quite exceptional,

both in the nature of the figures and their arrangement and in the absence of the hand of God and the altar.

The reverse carries another unintelligible inscription of seven lines in Greek, probably a magic formula. Between the fifth and the sixth lines is a snake. Under the inscription there are three different symbols — possibly a central christogram between two crosses. The inscription is framed by a ladder pattern.

Unpublished

References: Bonner, 1950: 222, 226; 310-311, no.

343; pl. XVIII; Finney, 1995.

33 SASSANIAN GEM DEPICTING THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

Carnelian

Sassanian Empire

Third-seventh centuries

Diameter: 1.0 cm; thickness: 0.2 cm

Private collection

The gem is a round convex bezel of carnelian, depicting the Sacrifice of Isaac. It shows an abbreviated representation of the *akedah*, consisting of a central bearded figure, an altar and a ram. Abraham faces right, wearing a long skirt, with his left arm raised towards the altar, which is flanked on the left by a flame and on the right by a ram. On the extreme right appears a tree, to which the ram is tethered. A ground line appears beneath the figures.

Even more abbreviated Sassanian representations of the *akedah* are known, showing only Abraham and an altar. These gems are often identified as depicting a Zoroastrian *magus* and a fire-altar. There are also a few examples which depict a schematic representation of Isaac bound on the altar.

This family of gems is generally attributed to Christian minorities living in the Sassanian realm;

however, as they display no specific Christian attributes, they could also have been owned by Jews, large numbers of whom lived in the Sassanian empire. *Unpublished*

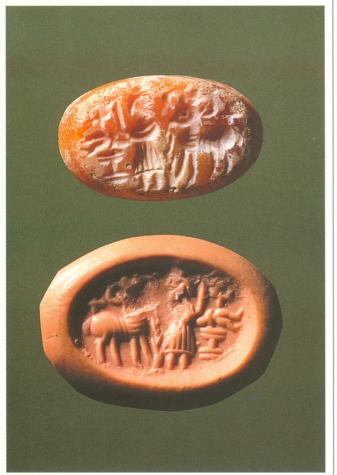
References: Lerner, 1977: 18-22; pl. IV, nos. 24-30; pl. V, nos. 30-35; Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 94-95, no. 350.

34 SASSANIAN GEM DEPICTING THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

Pink chalcedony
Sassanian Empire
Third-seventh centuries

Length: 1.5 cm; width: 9.5 mm; thickness: 0.3 cm

Private collection



The gem is oval and flat, and bears a scene similar to that depicted on no. 33.

Unpublished

References: Lerner, 1977: 18-22; pl. IV, nos. 24-30; pl. V, nos. 30-35.

35 RING DEPICTING THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

Bronze

Provenance unknown

Ca. sixth century

Diameter: 1.7 cm; thickness: 0.1 cm

Private collection

This bronze ring depicts the Sacrifice of Isaac. The ram, with curled horns, is shown on the left, facing right towards the altar and the knife, which stand in the centre of the scene, with the knife resting on top of the altar. Abraham has a clearly marked beard and eye, and faces left, with his hand resting on Isaac's head. His body and legs are less clear and consist of broader indentations on the surface of the bezel. Isaac appears as a small figure, apparently blindfolded, on the right of the ring. The altar is depicted below Abraham. The hand of God is absent in this representation.

Unpublished

References: Bonner, 1950: 222, 226; 310-311, no.

343; pl. XVIII; Finney, 1995.

JOSEPH



וְישְׂרָאֵל אָהַב אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִכְּל־בְּנְיוּ בִּי־בֶּן־זְקִנִים הוּא לוֹ וְעָשָׂה לוֹ כְּתנֶת פּפִים: (בראשים לוֹ 3)

(Δ΄ ΕΓΑΨΊ (ΕΓΑΨΊ (Δ΄ Ι΄) (ΕΓΑΨΊ (Δ΄ Ι΄) (ΕΓΑΨΊ (Δ΄ Ιωσηφ παρὰ πάντας τοὺς υἱοὺς αὐτοῦ ὅτι υἱὸς γήρους ἡν αὐτῷ ἐποίησεν δὲ αὐτῷ χιτῶνα ποικίλον. (ΓΕΝΕΣΙΣ 37: 3)

SUPER OMNES FILIOS SUOS EO QUOD IN SENECTUTE GENUISSET EUM FECITQUE EI TUNICAM POLYMITAM. (GENESIS 37: 3)

Israel loved Joseph more than any of his sons, for he was the son of his old age, and he made him an ornamented tunic. (Genesis 37: 3)

The career of Joseph provided inspiration for Jewish and Christian commentators on various social, religious and political issues. Joseph's steadfastness in the face of temptation, his filial love for his father, his loyalty to his family and his general conduct became favourite object lessons in rabbinic homiletics. Among Egyptian Jews and Christians, Joseph became a national hero. The Jewish writer Philo of Alexandria viewed him as a model of personal conduct, and in the same city a festival was held in his honour, replacing the Greek festival of Adonis. In the Byzantine Church, according to the Liturgy of Saint James (the Greek Liturgy of the Patriarch of Antioch), on the first Sunday after Christmas the Apostle is commemorated along with Saint Joseph and the prophet David (Galavaris, 1970: 63). The ivory episcopal throne of Archbishop Maximian (546-556) of Ravenna was decorated with scenes from Joseph's life because the biblical patriarch was considered a fitting model for a Christian bishop.

36 DECORATIVE STRIP WITH THREE SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF JOSEPH

Textile

Egypt

Seventh-eighth centuries

Height: 11.5 cm; width: 19.5 cm

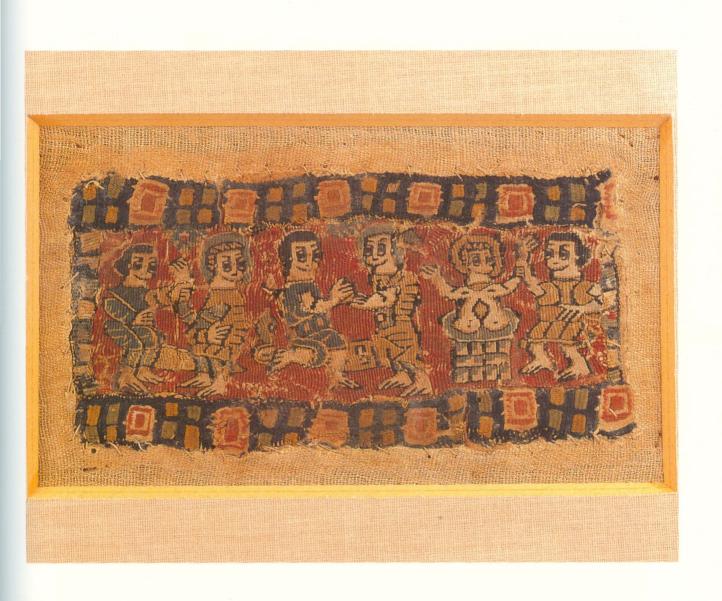
Haifa Museums, National Maritime Museum,

inv. no. 6717

This very fine slit tapestry has a warp of undyed linen, S-spun and Z-plied, and a weft of undyed linen mixed with wool dyed in red, dark blue, two shades of green, and ochre.

The strip is bordered by large squares with a dot(?) in the middle alternating with a square group composed of four small squares. It depicts three scenes: on the left, the angel shows Joseph the way to his brothers (Gen. 37: 14); in the middle Joseph is stripped of his coat 'of many colours' (Gen. 37: 23; now generally translated as an 'ornamented tunic' or a 'coat with sleeves'). On the right, he is pushed into the pit by one of his brothers (Gen. 37: 24). Joseph's coat is red. The angel has a halo around his head.

Published: Baginski and Tidhar, 1980: 101, no. 138.



37 DECORATIVE STRIP DEPICTING JOSEPH'S DREAM

Textile

Egypt

Seventh-eighth centuries

Height: 15.5 cm; width: 18.5 cm

Haifa Museums, National Maritime Museum,

inv. no. 6759

This tapestry was made with an S-spun, Z-plied warp of undyed linen, and a weft apparently combining undyed linen and wool, though most of the latter is missing.

A patterned border frames Joseph's dream, in which the sun, moon and eleven stars bow down to him. Joseph is depicted asleep, below the stars (Gen. 37: 5–7). In the field surrounding the dream episode, various figures are depicted, probably connected with the story of Joseph. Four figures are shown on the upper part, and four in the lower.

Published: Baginski and Tidhar, 1980: 100, no. 137.



38, 39. Two fragments of North African Bowls, depicting Joseph Fleeing from Potiphar's wife

Red slip ware Fourth century

(38) Tunisia, North Africa

Height: 6.3 cm; width: 11.7 cm; thickness: 0.7 cm

Private collection

(39) Sheikh Zuweid, Northern Sinai, Egypt

Height: 5.7 cm; width: 5.6 cm; thickness: 0.2-0.4 cm

Israel Antiquities Authority 1957.1100



These fragments show part of the scene of Potiphar's wife attempting to seduce Joseph (Gen. 39: 12) which can be reconstructed on the basis of an identical figure on a bowl in the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum in Mainz (see drawing). She appears on the left, dressed in a long *stola*, draped in a *palla* and crouching (perhaps a reminiscence of Doidalsas's famous statue of Aphrodite, showing the goddess crouching as she bathes herself). Potiphar's wife grasps Joseph's cloak with her right hand. To her right is Joseph, running away, with his head turned to the left; he is bearded and wears a Phrygian cap,

a short-sleeved tunic, and a cloak, maybe a paenula.

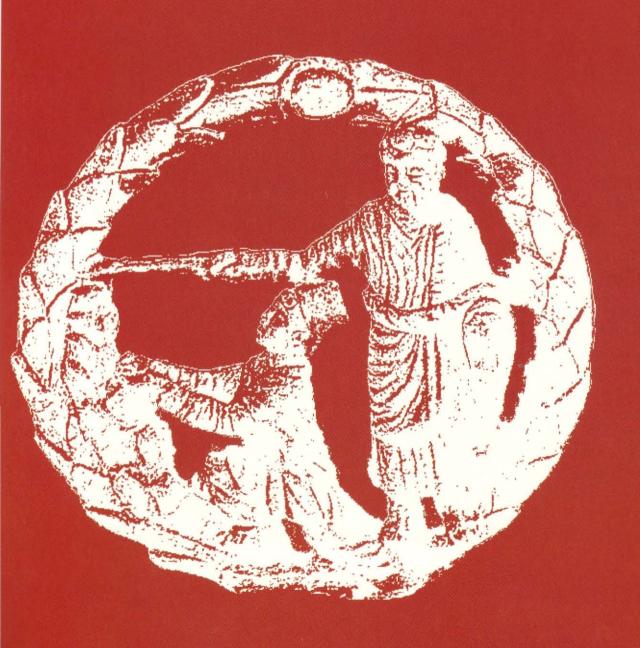
These fragments can be associated with the Group C type of North African red slip ware plates, which has been dated to the fourth century.

(38) Unpublished

(39) *Published*: Ben-Arieh, 1974: 91; pl. 29, no. 1, sherd 2.

References: Vikan, 1979b: 464-465, no. 415.

Moses



וַיִּרָא מַלְאַך ה' אֵלְיו בְּלַבַּת־אֵשׁ מִתּוֹךְ הַפְּנֶה וַיִּרְא וְהִנֵּה הַפְּנֶה בֹּעֵר בָּאֵשׁ וְהַפְּנֶה אֵינֶנוּ אָבְּל:... וַיִּקְרָא אֵלְיו אֶלֹהִים מִתּוֹךְ הַפְּנֶה וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה משֵׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּנִי: (שמות ג 2, 4)

" Ωφθη δὲ αὐτῷ ἀγγελος Κυρίου ἐν φλογὶπυρὸς ἐκ τοὺ βάτου. Καὶ ὁρᾳ ὅτι ὁ βάτος καίεται πυρὶ ὁ δὲ βάτος οὐ κατεκαίετο ... ἐκάλεσεν αὐτὸν Κύριος ἐκ τοῦ βάτου λέγων Μωυσῆ Μωυσῆ. Ο δὲ εἶπε Τί ἐστιν. (ΕΞΟΔΟΣ 3: 2, 4)

APPARUITQUE EI DOMINUS IN FLAMMA IGNIS DE MEDIO RUBI ET VIDEBAT QUOD RUBUS ARDERET ET NON CONBURERETUR ... CERCENS AUTEM DOMINUS QUOD PERGERET AD VIDENDUM VOCAVIT EUM DE MEDIO RUBI ET AIT: MOSES, MOSES, QUI RESPONDIT ADSUM (EXODI 3: 2, 4)

An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire out of a bush. He gazed, and there was a bush all aflame, yet the bush was not consumed... God called to him out of the bush: 'Moses! Moses!' He answered, 'Here I am'. (Exodus 3: 2, 4)

MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH

40 AMULET SHOWING MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH (?)

Limonite Levant Fifth-sixth centuries Height: 3 cm; width: 2.3 cm Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem 1162

An oval amulet with a suspension loop at the top. On the obverse is an orant (praying figure), dressed in a long gown, with a halo around his head. To his left is a shrub, perhaps the Burning Bush, and to his right what may be an altar or the Tablets of the Ten Commandments. The scene is framed with a rope border. The reverse depicts an inscription in three registers, with illegible characters.

Published: Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 80-81, no. 300g.

References: Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 80-81, nos. 300f, 300h.

MOSES STRIKING THE ROCK

The miracle of Moses striking the rock to produce water (Exodus 17: 1–7, Num. 20: 1–13) owes its frequency in early Christian art to the general baptismal connotation of water, and also to its interpretation as a symbol of Jesus, the living rock, from whom flows the wine of the Eucharist (1 Corinthians 10: 4: 'They drank from the spiritual rock which followed them and that rock was Christ').

41 CHILD'S SARCOPHAGUS AND LID DEPICTING NOAH AND MOSES

Marble

Rome (sarcophagus); Sardinia (lid) 320-330 CE (sarcophagus); fifth century (lid)

Sarcophagus: length: 98.5 cm; height: 38.5 cm; width: 38 cm

Lid: length: 90 cm; height: 19 cm; width 45 cm Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für

Spätantike und Byzantinische Kunst, inv. no.17/61

The lid and chest of this sarcophagus were not originally made for each other, but had separate histories until being used together in the fifth century. The lid was reused several times in different buildings; it was only reworked as a lid more than a century after the sarcophagus chest had been similarly reworked. The original lid of the sarcophagus has been lost, and with it the name of the original child for whom the sarcophagus was carved. The later lid was made specifically for the burial of the boy Theusebius.

The sarcophagus chest, the material for which was probably found in the ruins of a villa, is decorated on the front with a frieze showing, from left to right: the birth of Jesus; the deceased child, shown as an orant between two figures (see detailed description

below); Noah with the dove; and Moses striking the rock. The nativity of Jesus on the far left shows Mary in profile, dressed in a *stola* and draped in a *palla* — the usual costume of Roman women. Her head is covered, in the fashion of a Roman *matrona* (married woman). She sits on a wicker chair covered by drapery, with the newborn Jesus in her arms, wound in *fasces* (swaddling bands). On her right, two Magi are leaving; they are shown in Eastern dress, with Phrygian caps, long-sleeved tunics, cloaks, and long trousers. The scene does not match the standard (canonical) depiction, as generally three Magi are shown. The central scene depicts an idealized and

standardized picture of the deceased child, dressed in a long tunic and standing in the orant pose between two bearded men; they are draped in *pallia* (cloaks), with the one on the right pointing to a scroll which he holds in his left hand. On the right of this group is Noah, shown as a young man and dressed in a long tunic; he stands in the ark, receiving the dove, which clasps an olive branch in its beak (Gen. 8: 11). On the extreme right is Moses, shown in profile as a young man; he is draped in a *pallium*, and strikes the rock with his staff. Crouching figures, probably women, wearing *polos* hats, drink the water flowing from the rock.



We acknowledge with thanks the assistance given by Prof. Raphael Loewe of University College, London; Prof. J.A. Crook, St John's College, Cambridge; and Dr. Joyce Reynolds, Newnham College, Cambridge, for making provisional suggestions for the reading of the following inscriptions.

The inscription painted in red on the base of the sarcophagus chest seems to be an abbreviated version of the inscription on the lid, and reads: HIC PRIOR MIHI FILIVS HIC VIRGO VIRGINEM PRIOR DEDICAVIT HVNC LOCVM

Hic prior mihi filius hic virgo virginem prior dedicavit hunc locum

'Here my son, who died before me, unmarried, has

consecrated (?) for me this virgin place.'

The lid consists of a wide slab, bearing a long inscription in poetic metre incised in two columns, separated by a christogram, on the left and right. The lid, which is longer and wider than the chest, was attached to it with iron clamps. The inscription, from the mid-fourth century, records that the deceased was named Theusebius, and was born on the first of April, baptised on the second of April, and died within thirteen months.

The inscription, consisting of seven lines in each column reads as follows:

 Born on the first of April, baptised on the second of April,

Column A

- 1. NAT.KAL.APRIL
- 2. THEVSEBIO VIRGINI NEOFITO INNOCE
- 3. HIC MIHI CARO HIC PIO HIC IGITVR FILIVS ECCE SEPVLTO
- 4. THEVSEBI SANCTIFICO SEMPER SOCIATO PVDORI
- 5. BISSENOS MENSES DEO QVI PERTVLIT ANNVM
- 6. TERDENNOS DIES SUPER ISTA LVCE MORATVS EST
- 7. BENEMERENTI FECERVNT . IN . DOM
- * = chi-rho
- ** = heart leaf

Column B

- 1. BAT IIII NON APRIL
- 2. IMMACVLATVS A PECCO FELICI CONDITVS DONO EST
- 3. NATALI COMPLETVS ET ITEM A * TO RENATVS
- 4. AETERNAM VITAE PENETRAVIT THEVSEBIVS SEDEM
- 5. VIRGINEMO GERIT DOM TRIBVENTE CORONA
- 6. RVFINUS ET SEVERA PARENTES FILIO DVLCISSIMO
- 7. QVESQVAS IN PACE ** DEP. VI., NON., MAI

Column A

- 1. nat(o) kal(endis) april(ibus)
- 2. thevsebio virgini neofito innoce(nti)
- 3. hic mihi caro hic pio hic igitvr filivs ecce sepvlto
- 4. thevsebi sanctifico semper sociato pydori
- 5. bissenos menses deo qvi pertvlit annym
- 6. terdennos dies svper ista lvce moratvs est
- 7. benemerenti fecervnt in dom(ino)

Column B

- 1. bat(izato) IV non(as) april(es)
- 2. immacvlatus a pecco felici conditvs dono est
- 3. natali completvs et item a (Chris)to renatvs
- 4. aeternam vitae penetravit thevsebivs sedem
- virgine(a)mq(ue) gerit dom(ino) tribvente corona(m)
- 6. rvfinvs et severa parentes filio dvlcissimo
- 7. qvesqvas in pace dep(osito) VI non(as) mai(as)

- 2. To Theusebius, unmarried, newly-baptised, innocent. Unstained by sin he has been (? buried) brought to a close with a happy gift.
- 3. Here dear to me, here dutiful, here then see my son is buried, having (?) completed a year with a birthday and likewise been given a second birth by Christ.
- 4. To Theusebius (? to) the pious one, sanctified by the modesty always linked with him. Theusebius has entered the everlasting seat of life,
- 5. Who lived for twice six months (?) under God, a year, and wore the crown of a virgin which the Lord gave to him.
- 6. He lingered thirty days beyond that light. Rufinus and Severa his parents made (this) in the Lord for their sweetest and well-deserving son. May you rest in peace, buried on the second of May.

The style of the inscription was unusual for Rome, and was obviously modelled on the funerary inscriptions for women used in Sardinia, adapted here for a child.

Published: Effenberger and Severin, 1992: 87-88, no. 14; Hempel, 1966: 72-87, pl. 6; Jastrzebowska, 1989: 783-804, fig. 1; Arnulf, 1989: 139-150, pl. 3.

42 OIL LAMP DEPICTING MOSES STRIKING THE ROCK

Bronze Italy (?)

Fourth century

Height: 11.5 cm; width: 13.5 cm; length: 14.5 cm

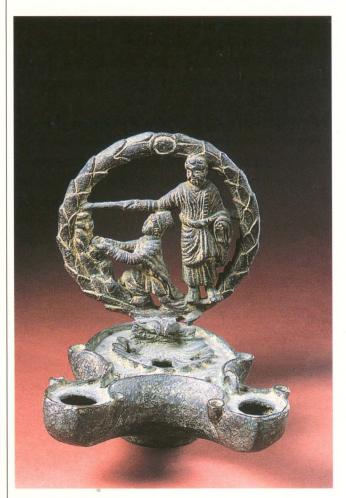
Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Firenze,

inv. no. 1674

This bronze lamp with two nozzles has a handle in the shape of a wreath. Inside appears Moses, shown on the right, with his head turned slightly to the left; he is draped in a *pallium*, and strikes the rock with his staff. Facing the rock, a crouching woman, shown in profile, scoops up the water with both

hands in order to drink it. She is dressed in a *stola*, draped in a *palla* and wears a *polos* hat. The figures on the handle have much in common with the sculpture on contemporary sarcophagi.

Published: Volbach, 1961: 315, no. 12; Bovini, 1950: 13, fig. 9; Toesca, 1927: 67, fig 49.



THE SPIES AND THE PROMISED LAND

Grape imagery appears frequently throughout the Bible. Isaiah likens God to the owner of a vineyard and Israel to the vineyard (Isaiah 5); a similar metaphor is employed by Jeremiah (2: 21). Jesus is quoted as comparing himself to the vine: 'I am the true vine and my Father is the vine-dresser' (John 15: 1). Furthermore, the grape represented joy and eternal life — one reason why it was so often used to decorate oil-lamps. In particular, the story of the spies expresses the promise that God gave to His people (Num. 13: 23-27). The Church Fathers elaborated on this image: according to Ambrosius (De fide 4: 12) and Augustine (Contra Faustem 12: 42), the pole on which the enormous bunches of grapes were hung (see Num. 13: 23) represents the cross and the grapes symbolize Christ.

43 NORTH AFRICAN LAMP DECORATED WITH THE TWO SPIES CARRYING A BUNCH OF GRAPES

Red slip ware Carthage, North Africa Fourth-fifth centuries

Height: 5 cm; length: 13.5 cm; width: 8 cm

Private collection

The lamp's discus is decorated with the two spies, carrying a long branch across their shoulders. From the branch hangs a huge triangular bunch of grapes, reaching down past their feet. The channel around the discus is decorated with raised grapes and vine leaves. There are two small filling-holes in the discus which cut slightly into the bodies of the figures. The base of the lamp has a raised ring.

Published: Goodnick Westenholz, 1998: 112, no. 79.



44 LAMP SHOWING THE TWO SPIES AND A CHRISTOGRAM

Red slip ware

Carthage, North Africa Fourth-fifth centuries

Height: 4.7 cm; width: 3.6 cm; thickness: 0.3-0.5 cm

Private collection

The fragment depicts the two spies, carrying a long branch across their shoulders. From the branch hangs a huge triangular bunch of grapes, reaching down past their feet. Above the spies is a small christogram, inscribed in a circle.

Unpublished

References: Ennabli, 1976: 47, no. 46, pl. II. For palm branch motif, see: Hayes, 1972: 216, 223. Tortorella, 1987: 131–132. Barbera and Petriaggi, 1993: 376, no. 211; 392–393, nos. 503–504.

45 NORTH AFRICAN LAMP MOULD DEPICTING TWO SPIES CARRYING A BUNCH OF GRAPES

Gypsum

Carthage, North Africa

Fourth-fifth centuries

Length: 20.0 cm; width: 12.9 cm;

thickness: 4.6-5.0 cm

A gypsum mould for a red slip ware oil lamp. The discus is decorated with the two spies, carrying a long branch across their shoulders. From the branch hangs a huge triangular bunch of grapes, reaching down past their feet. The channel around the discus is decorated with a palm branch, pointing towards the handle.

Published: Goodnick Westenholz, 1998: 112, no. 80. References: Ennabli, 1976: 47, pl. II, no. 46. For palm branch motif, see: Hayes, 1972: 216, 223. Tortorella, 1987: 127–128. Saguí and Tortorici, 1987: 166–167. Barbera and Petriaggi, 1993: 371, no. 121.

SAMSON

The story of the biblical Samson and his heroic deeds is recounted in Judges 13–16. His first adventure took place on his way to Timnah to arrange his marriage. Just before he was attacked by a lion, he was seized by the spirit of God and slew the beast barehanded (Judg. 14: 5-10). Elements of this and other deeds were easily related to mythological heroic tales for which iconographic illustrations were readily available. The scene of Samson wrestling with the lion is analogous to the Greek legend of Herakles fighting against the Nemean Lion, the first and bestknown of Herakles' twelve labours. Herakles and the lion appear as early as the Archaic period (thus before the fifth century BCE) in Greek iconography. Samson's conquest of the lion was probably regarded as a metaphor for good overcoming evil; Samson's fight with the lion was seen as representing Jesus defeating Satan and breaking the jaws of Hell.

46 BELT BUCKLE, DECORATED WITH SAMSON WRESTLING THE LION

Bronze Levant

Ca. sixth century

Length: 5.6 cm; width: 2.4 cm; thickness: 1.2 cm (with suspension rings), 0.2 cm (without suspension rings) Private collection

The buckle bears two distinct motifs. On the left, two facing birds with cropped wings are framed by a geometric pattern at the top, and by tear-shapes surrounded by a frame at the bottom. On the right a triple circular border frames Samson wrestling with the lion. The two figures are very schematic, with Samson on the left and the lion on the right.



In this period belts formed part of military dress. Many soldiers were still pagan, and it seems that pagan iconography was retained longer in the army than elsewhere; an identification of the figure as Herakles rather than Samson might thus be more likely. This was the last period in which Jews were allowed to serve in the army; they were expelled definitely from military service during the reign of Justinian, after reiterated protests from the Christian clergy.

Published: Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 94-95, no. 354. References: Randall, 1980: 154, no. 433b.

47 GLASS PENDANT DEPICTING HERAKLES WRESTLING A LION

Yellow glass

Eastern Mediterranean

Fourth-fifth centuries

Height with suspension ring: 1.9 cm;

diameter: 1.7 cm; thickness: 0.3 cm

Private collection

The stamped motif in the frame depicts a very schematic naked Herakles, wrestling with the Nemean lion (?). To the left is Herakles' club. The suspension loop is intact.

Unpublished

References: Eisen and Kouchakji, 1927: 533 ('Man with Lion'), fig. 230, 3rd row, first medallion; pl. 131.

48 GLASS PENDANT DEPICTING A ROMAN EMPEROR IN THE GUISE OF HERAKLES

Yellow glass
Eastern Mediterranean
Fourth-fifth centuries
Height with suspension ring: 2.6 cm;
diameter: 2.2 cm
Haifa Museum, inv. no. 145

This glass pendant is similar to no. 47. The stamped motif in the frame depicts a very schematic naked Herakles, wrestling with the Nemean lion. To the left is Herakles' club. The suspension loop is intact. There are, however, some differences: a winged figure, probably a Victory, appears above and to the right of Herakles, presenting the hero with a wreath.

The combination of Herakles and a Victory, which always appears in association with the emperor's image, may indicate that Herakles actually represents the emperor on this medallion. Herakles was regarded as the model for and the protector of many Roman emperors (as he had been for Alexander the Great and other Hellenistic kings), since he personified both strength and justice. This example might portray the emperor Maximianus, nicknamed 'Herculeus', who reigned from 286 to 305.

Traces of Greek letters survive to the left of Herakles' head and at the foot of the Victory. *Unpublished*

References: Eisen and Kouchakji, 1927: 533 ('Man with Lion'), fig. 230, 3rd row, first medallion; pl. 131; Brilliant, 1979: 158-159, no. 135.

49 BELT BUCKLE, WITH SAMSON WRESTLING THE LION

Bronze

Levant

Ca. sixth century

Length: 5.4 cm; width: 2.4 cm; thickness: 0.9 cm (with suspension rings), 0.3 cm (without suspension rings) Private collection

This buckle, which is similar to no. 46, is composed of two distinct parts. The left depicts two opposed birds with cropped wings, each surrounded by a dropshaped frames. The right part consists of a double drop-shaped frame, within which is Samson wrestling with the lion.

Unpublished

References: Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 94-95, no. 354; Randall, 1980: 154, no. 433b.



DAVID



... וַיּאמֶר ה׳ לְּדְּ אַתָּה תִּרְעָה אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־יִשְּׂרָאֵל ... וְאַתָּה תִּהְיֶה לְנָגִיד עַל־יִשְּׂרָאֵל: (שמואל ב׳ ה 2)

... καὶ εἶπεν Κύριος πρὸς σὲ Σὺ ποιμανεῖς τὸν λαόν μου τὸν Ἰσραηλ καὶ σὺ ἔσει εἰς ἡγούμενον ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραηλ. (ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΩΝ Β' 5: 2)

... DIXIT AUTEM DOMINUS AD TE TU PASCES
POPULUM MEUM ISRAHEL ET TU ERIS DUX
SUPER ISRAHEL. (II SAMUHELIS 5: 2)

... And the Lord said to you: 'You shall shepherd My people Israel; you shall be ruler of Israel'. (II Samuel 5: 2)

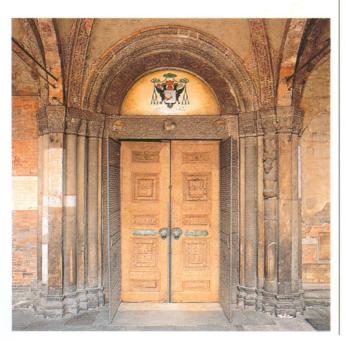
50 Two door panels with scenes from the life of David

Wood Mediolanum (Milan), Italy Ca. 386 CE

First panel: height: 49 cm; width: 35 cm Second panel: height: 49 cm; width: 33 cm Basilica di Sant' Ambrogio, Museo, Milan

These two wooden panels formed part of the original door of the main entrance to the Basilica of the Martyrs, which was built in 382 in Milan under the direction of Bishop Ambrosius.

Ambrosius was probably born 339/340 in Augusta Treverorum (Triers) in the province of Germania. He came from an old patrician Roman family, and his father had been praetorian praefect of Gaul. Ambrosius was educated in Rome, and in 374 was appointed consul of Aemilia and Liguria. In this capacity, he was present at the election of the new bishop of Milan in the autumn of the same year, and



was himself elected by popular demand. The statesman governor became the statesman bishop, acting as prime minister to the emperor Valentinian II.

According to the art historian A. Goldschmiedt, the original door had ten panels, illustrating the youth of David, which were restored in the middle of the eighteenth century, thus receiving a Roccoco overlay. The door panels' arrangement, however, had been altered earlier, in the Romanesque period (ninth century). Only the two panels shown here were left quite untouched by the restoration. The full series probably included the following scenes:

- 1: David as a shepherd (1 Sam. 16: 11, 17: 34-35) (shown here)
- 2: Samuel, Jesse, David and his brothers (1 Sam. 16: 5-13) (shown here)
- 3: David is called back home by a messenger sent by his father (1 Sam. 16: 12) (shown here)
- 4: David is anointed king by Samuel (1 Sam. 16: 13) (shown here)
- 5: David is presented to Saul (1 Sam. 16: 21)
- 6: David kills Goliath (1 Sam. 17: 51)
- 7: David plays the harp to Saul (1 Sam. 16: 23)
- 8: David tells Saul that he is ready to kill Goliath (1 Sam. 17: 32)
- 9: David talks to Saul (1 Sam. 17: 32-37)
- 10: Saul gives his armour to David (1 Sam. 17: 38)

The leaves of the door are framed by acanthus ornament in high relief. Square and rectangular fields alternate, each with a foliage frame.

In the first panel on the lower register the young David is shown as a shepherd among his sheep. He is dressed in a tunic and a cloak, striking a fleeing bear (1 Sam. 17: 34–35); near him stands a tree, the central element of the composition. In the upper part of the panel, above a dividing line, are six figures dressed in tunics and *pallia*, probably representing Jesse and his other sons (1 Sam. 16: 10).

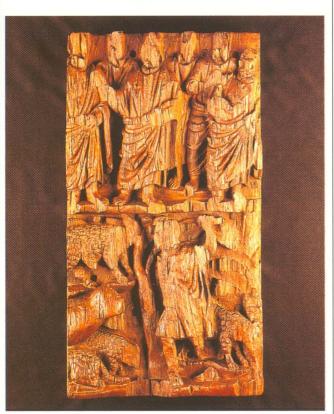
In the lower register of the second panel appears the messenger sent by Jesse to summon David home

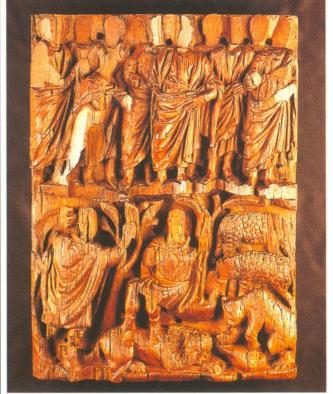
(1 Sam. 16: 12). He is shown on the left, with a long cloak hanging from his shoulders, and his right hand raised, as he talks to David, who sits in the middle of the panel between two trees, like an emperor on his throne, wearing a tunic and with his right foot on the carcass of a lion. To his right are two sheep and the carcass of a bear. In the upper part of the panel, above a dividing line, David is shown being anointed king by Samuel. Nine figures appear here, dressed in tunics and *pallia*; the fifth from the left probably represents Samuel. The other figures represent David's brothers. David, shown as a smaller figure, bows before Samuel. Unlike the other figures, he is dressed in a tunic and a cloak (*a sagum?*).

It is interesting that there is no clear tie between any episodes in the New Testament and the scenes from the life of David chosen by Ambrosius; perhaps Ambrosius was simply fond of this biblical story. Another possibility is that for Ambrosius, in his role as bishop of Milan, the episode depicting David defying King Saul represented the superiority of divine law (symbolized by the divinely-ordained David) over secular law (Saul, once divinely-ordained, was later rejected by God for disobedience, and could only command secular power). For Ambrosius this was an essential issue, since he defied the Emperor Theodosius the Great twice, with success.

Scenes from David's life did not often appear in Early Christian and Byzantine iconography. An important exception is provided by the nine silver plates from Cyprus, showing scenes from David's life, which have been dated to the seventh century. Some of them depict the same scenes as the wooden door panels of the Basilica di Sant' Ambrogio, Milan. In Early Christian art the figure of David was identified with Jesus, since the New Testament traces the latter's descent from David (Matt. 1: 6).

Only in the Middle Ages, however, did the figure





of David become the paradigm for the Christian ruler, and thus a royal symbol in Western iconography of the eighth-tenth centuries (Carolingian and Ottonian).

Similar arrangements of square panels carved with figures appear on the fifth-century wooden doors of the church of Santa Sabina in Rome, and, in the sixth-century East, on the doors of the churches of St Catherine in Mount Sinai and at St Barbara in Cairo.

Published: Brandenburg, 1987: 80-129; Reinhard Felice, 1990: 129-133; Vaccaro, 1992: 117-135; Volbach, 1961: 330. no. 102.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

From the third millennium BCE onwards in the ancient Near East, the monarch was thought of as the 'shepherd of his people'. For instance, the famous eighteenth-century BCE king Hammurabi proclaimed himself as 'Hammurabi, prince, favourite of the god Enlil, shepherd, beloved of the goddess Ninlil, reverent one who heeds the god Shamash ... when the god Enlil gave to me to rule the people of the land (and) entrusted their lead-rope into my hands...1. King David actually began his life as a shepherd looking after sheep (1 Sam. 16: 11, 17: 20, 34-35), and was later given the task of shepherding the people of Israel: '... and the Lord said to you: "You shall shepherd My people Israel; you shall be ruler of Israel" (2 Sam. 5: 2). David became the ideal ruler and the eternal type of the true shepherd of Israel. The image of false shepherds appears in the Prophets: 'Ah, shepherds who lose and scatter the sheep of my pasture, declares the Lord. Assuredly, thus said the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who should tend My people: It is you who let My flock scatter and go astray' (Jer. 23: 1-2). God is also described as a shepherd: 'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want' (Ps. 23: 1). These two metaphors unite in the Christian image of Jesus as the good shepherd: 'I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep' (John 10: 11). The allegorical figure of Jesus as the good shepherd appears early in Christian literature (John 10: 1-16 and Luke 15: 3-7) and was elaborated by the early Church Fathers, such as Clemens of Alexandria.

Although this metaphor developed in the ancient Near East, the corresponding iconographic motif evolved in the classical world. In classical art, small figurines, statuettes and statues showed the god Hermes as moschophoros ('calf-bearer') or kriophoros ('lamb/ewe-bearer').² Hermes appears as a young shepherd carrying a lamb, or less often an ewe, on his shoulders, and was honoured for finding lost sheep. Thus the pagan image was easily assimilated to the biblically-derived metaphor describing Jesus. In the pagan art of late antiquity, the Good Shepherd had a clear significance as a philanthropic saviour for both pagans and Christians.³

The earliest example of the adoption by the Christians of the Good Shepherd motif seems to be the third-century clay lamps produced by Annius Serapidorus, a potter from central Italy who specialized in producing lamps bearing the shepherd motif. There is no evidence that they were made specifically for Christians, but as the art historian Paul Corby Finney notes, 'it is reasonable to suppose that at least an occasional Christian customer will have been prompted to purchase one of Annius' shepherd lamps on the basis of its discus subject:4 These lamps depicted the Good Shepherd on the discus together with various other pagan figures. Though it is impossible to tell the significance attributed to this motif by the craftsmen who made the lamps, Christians may have deliberately bought this type of lamp, as the originally pagan motif had by now acquired a Christian allegorical meaning. At the Christian house of prayer in Dura Europos, Syria, which dates from the same period, one of the wall panels depicts the figure of the Good Shepherd.⁵

In Rome, the Good Shepherd appears in funerary contexts late in the third century. The motif occurs in the mosaics of the cemetery under St Peter's, in the wall paintings of the Tomb of the Aurelii, and in the Catacombs of Via Latina, of Domitilla, and of Callistus. The popularity of this motif continued after the reign of Constantine (306–337), when Christianity became the official faith of the imperial court.

The well-known depiction of Hermes as Hermes Kriophoros or Moschophoros (see above) began in the Archaic period in Greece (550–480 BCE), with bronze statuettes of this image from Arcadia. In terracotta figurines Hermes Kriophoros appears in

¹ Frayne, 1990: 337, 4.3.6.3. lines 6-9, 15-19.

2 Grabar, 1967: 270-271, figs. 301-303. These statuettes were made in Rome and Constantinople.

51 HELLENISTIC STATUETTE OF HERMES KRIOPHOROS ('LAMB/EWE-BEARER')

Bronze

Eastern Mediterranean (Greece?)

Fourth-third centuries BCE

Height: 9.4 cm; width: 4.1 cm; thickness: 1.9 cm

Private collection

This small bronze figurine depicts Hermes Kriophoros. The story associated with this image is linked with a somewhat dubious aspect of the deity: some hours after Hermes, son of Zeus, king of the gods, and the mortal Maia, was born on Mount Cyllene, the baby god invented the lyre, which he fashioned from a tortoise shell. He decided to steal the flocks and herds that belonged to the god Apollo. With the help of the lyre, he made the guardians of Apollo's animals fall asleep, and then led the flocks away. Ultimately, Apollo and Hermes made peace. Apollo received the lyre from Hermes as a present, and Hermes received the care of the stolen animals. Not surprisingly, Hermes was also the god of thieves.



³ Carder, 1979b: 519.

⁴ Finney, 1994: 125.

⁵ Grabar, 1967: 69, fig. 60.

⁶ Grabar, 1967: 68, 80, 102, 105, 108; figs. 27-28, 60, 76, 80, 94.

Sicily in the fifth century BCE, and at Locri in the period from 600 to 450 BCE. Pausanias reports a Hermes Kriophoros dedicated by the Pheneans in the *temenos* of Zeus' sanctuary in Olympia.

The statuette's pose is in keeping with classical Greek sculpture: the right leg supports all the body, while the left is slightly bent. On his shoulders Hermes carries a young kid (*krios*), which is looking at the god. Although Hermes is looking forwards, his head is slightly bowed to the left. His hair is curly and parted in the middle, and his mouth is slightly open. The muscles are emphasized.

Unpublished

References: Higgins, 1967: 54, 87, 89. Bieber, 1955: 106, figs. 11–12; Boardman, 1995: figs. 32, 76–78; Smith, 1991: fig. 69; Graves, 1974: 63; Walters, 1899: 21, no. 214, pl. II; 79, no. 555, pl. XIII; Stewart, 1990: 253; Mitten and Doeringer, 1970: nos. 247–248; Comstock and Vermeule, 1971: 24–25, nos. 22–23.

52 STATUE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Marble
Asia Minor
Fourth century
Height: 63.5 cm
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für
Spätantike und Byzantinische Kunst, inv. no. 4/57

This marble statue represents the quintessential depiction of the Good Shepherd. Parts of the statue are missing, such as the tail and the head of the ewe, and the left arm and the legs of the shepherd. The figure is depicted frontally. On his shoulder he carries a ewe, while he grasps the animal's legs with his right hand. His curly hair is parted in the middle, and his face is youthful and round. He is dressed in a short-sleeved tunic with a belt. The frontal pose suggests a late date for the statue.



Published: Effenberger and Severin, 1992: 104, no. 29. References: Klauser, 1958: 45, no. 9, pl. 2a; Schumacher, 1977: 99–102.

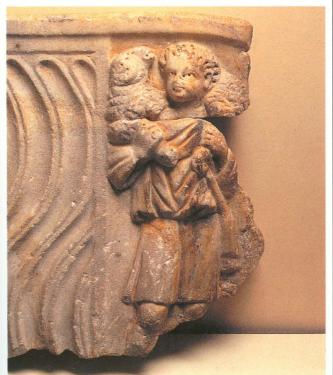
53 SARCOPHAGUS FRAGMENT DEPICTING THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Marble Rome, Italy Late third century

Height: 45.5 cm; width: 113 cm; thickness: 7 cm

Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem 1359

This fragment of a strigilated sarcophagus was decorated on the front with three panels: one in the centre and two at the corners. The front is broken on both sides and at the bottom, thus destroying the left panel. Only the upper part of the central panel remains, and in the right panel, parts of the Good Shepherd relief are missing. The central panel depicted the deceased, a woman with a scroll in her left hand, in front of a curtain looped back to the side (parapetasma). Her face is not very detailed; perhaps the artist did not have the time or means to





make a faithful portrait. Her hairstyle is characteristic of the third century CE, and she wears a *stola* and over it a *dalmatica* and a *palla*.

On the right panel is the Good Shepherd. He carries a ewe on his shoulders, his youthful face is round, and his hair is curly; he is dressed in a long-sleeved tunic. The standard drilling technique, dating from the Tetrarchic period (late third-early fourth centuries) was used for the corners of the mouth and the eyes.

Published: Brenk, 1981a: 301 no. 278.

References: Deichmann, Bovini, and Brandenburg, 1967: 66, pl. 23, no. 74, 68, pl. 24, no. 78, 184–185, pl. 70, no. 396, 311, pl. 119, nos. 756–757, 346, pl. 133, no. 826.

54 PLATE WITH GOOD SHEPHERD

Red slip ware

Tunisia, North Africa

Fourth-fifth centuries

Length: 8.8 cm; width: 7.6 cm; thickness: 0.2-0.4 cm

Private collection

This plate fragment depicts the Good Shepherd in relief. This figure was probably on the right side of the centre of the plate. On his shoulders the Good Shepherd carries a ewe, with its head to the left. The depiction matches the standard version of this motif from the fourth century: curly hair, a round youthful face, and a long-sleeved tunic. The only exception is his cloak, made of sheepskin.

Unpublished

References: Carder 1979: 520-521, no. 465.

55 MARBLE RECEPTACLE WITH THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Marble
Asia Minor
Late third-fourth centuries
Height: 25.5 cm; diameter (including spout): 44 cm
Private collection

This vessel is carved in the shape of a large bowl with a protruding rim that forms a spout. It is decorated on the rim with a rope-like band and three lion heads, in addition to the spout. The base is decorated with flower petals.

The body of the receptacle is divided into four narrative panels, or metopes, each decorated in relief with two figures. The symbolism of the scenes — if they should indeed be interpreted in a symbolic way

- is not immediately clear. In the original publication of this vessel, the imagery was interpreted as follows: the first metope shows the Good Shepherd, dressed in a long-sleeved tunic, and carrying a ewe on his shoulders. Another figure holds a skin that may be filled with milk; he could be a slave, since his tunic, which only covers one shoulder, is the traditional iconographic feature indicating a slave. The two figures face away from each other. The second metope depicts two women, facing each other; they are both dressed in a tunic and a himation, and one of them is squeezing liquid from a skin container into a pail. The milk is intended for the nurture of an infant, who appears on the two remaining panels. The third metope depicts a woman, dressed in a tunic and himation and holding a baby; on her left, a man wearing a long-sleeved tunic is working on a vase, with his back to the woman. The fourth metope depicts two men, dressed in long-sleeved tunics; the









bearded figure on the left seems to be giving the baby to the man on the right. Although this series of scenes has been interpreted as referring to Christian baptism and its spiritually nourishing qualities, it is impossible to be certain of this; it seems equally likely that the scenes simply depict rural activities, with the 'Good Shepherd' just representing a conscientious mortal keeper of sheep.

The shape of the object itself — a receptacle for holding and pouring liquids — and its corresponding decoration suggest that it may have been associated with a *domus ecclesiae* (a meeting-place for worship within a private house) or church, and that it may have been designed to hold the milk and honey that were fed to new Christians in the early days of the Church. It should be remembered, however, that the baby is symbolic of the new 'reborn' Christian after the baptism, since a newborn child is a symbol of innocence. In Early Christianity only adults were baptized, generally on their deathbed.

Published: Nesbitt, 1988: 20f., no. 15; 55f., no. 15.

56 RING DEPICTING THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Gold and onyx
Third-fourth centuries
Cologne, Germany
Diameter: 2.0 cm
Römisch-Germanisches
Museum, Cologne,
inv. no. 1039



This ring was produced by a local goldsmith and gem cutter from Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippiniensis, the ancient Roman settlement at Cologne. The *opus interassile* (the art of cutting precious stones — in this case onyx), was a characteristic product of third-century artisans in Cologne, which, together with Triers, was the vanguard of Roman culture on the Rhine.

The oval onyx was framed and backed by a thin gold plate, and was engraved with the motif of the Good Shepherd. He is depicted advancing to the left, dressed in a long-sleeved tunic, with his right arm reaching forwards, and with his left grasping the legs of the ewe on his shoulders. The shepherd's head is covered by the lower part of the ewe. It is interesting to note that the ewe is much larger than the shepherd.

Published: Kölner 1, 1974: 174, fig. 333.

57 RING WITH GEM INTAGLIO OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND DANIEL

Carnelian mounted in silver ring Eastern Roman Empire Second half of third century

Gem: length: ca. 9 mm;

width: ca. 12 mm

Ring: diameter: 24.4 mm

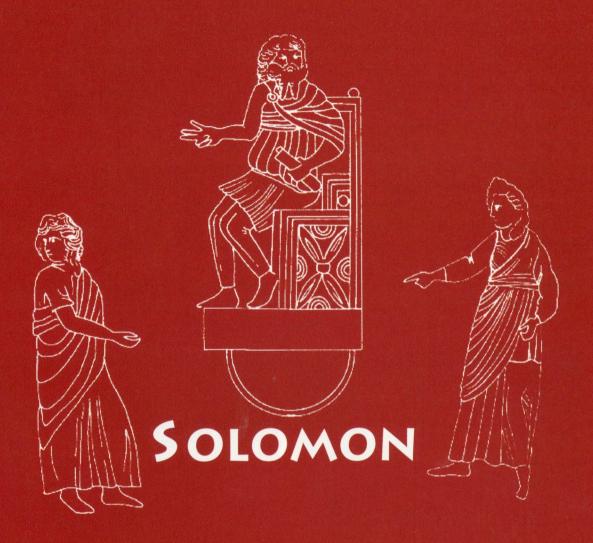
Private collection

The two scenes are arranged in registers. The upper register depicts the Good Shepherd, with curly hair, dressed in a short-sleeved tunic; his left hand grasps the legs of the ewe he carries on his shoulders, and his right holds a staff. Two sheep flank his feet.

The lower register depicts a naked Daniel standing in the orant posture between two lions (Dan. 6); to the left is a cock, and to the right, an X, perhaps representing a star. The star, symbol of the night, and the cock, symbol of the dawn, may allude to the length of Daniel's imprisonment in the lions' den, according to the biblical narrative. Daniel and the Good Shepherd appear together on several other gems. The ring's shape allows it to be dated to the second half of the third century.

Unpublished

References: For a ring of a very similar shape, see: Henkel, 1913: pl. 12, no. 433.



יְהִי ה' אֱלֹהָיךּ בְּרוּךְ אֲשֶׁר חָפֵץ בְּךְּ לְתִתְּךְ עַל־כִּפֵא יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאַהְבַת ה' אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַלְם וַיְשִׂימְךּ לְמֶלֶךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט וּצְרָקָה: (מלכים א' י 8–9) Γένοιτο Κύριος ὁ Θεός σου εὐλογημένος ὅς ἠθέλεσεν

Γένοιτο Κύριος ὁ Θεός σου εὐλογημένος ὅς ἠθέλεσεν ἐν σοὶ δοῦναί σε ἐπὶ θρόνου Ἰσραηλ διὰ τὸ ἀγαπᾶν Κύριον τὸν Ἰσραηλ στῆσαι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ ἔθετό σε βασιλέα ἐπ αὐτοὺς, τοῦ ποιεῖν κρίμα ἐν δικαιουσύνη καὶ ἐν κρίμασιν αὐτῶν. (ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΩΝ Γ' 10: 8-9)

SIT DOMINUS DEUS TUUS BENEDICTUS CUI PLACUISTI ET POSUIT TE SUPER THRONUM ISRAHEL EO QUOD DILEXERIT DOMINUS ISRAHEL IN SEMPITERNUM ET CONSTITUIT TE REGEM UT FACERES IUDICIUM ET

Praised be the Lord your God, who delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel. It is because of the Lord's everlasting love for Israel that He made you king to administer justice and righteousness. (I Kings 10: 8-9)

THE JUDGEMENT OF SOLOMON

58 Fresco with Judgement of Solomon from Pompeii

Fresco Pompeii, Campania, Italy First century

Length: 164.3 cm; height: 54.0 cm; thickness: 8.5 cm Soprintendenza Archeologica, delle Province di Napoli e Caserta, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, inv. no. 113197

This fresco was found in 1882 in the mansion known as 'Casa degli Ebrei' (House of the Jews). It is clearly inspired by Alexandrine art, which was much appreciated in the first century BCE and the first century CE in Rome. This Hellenistic trend became even more popular after the conquest of Egypt. Alexandrian art was characterized by grotesque subjects, both in sculpture and painting, and by its synthesis of Graeco-Hellenistic and Egyptian iconography.

On the right is Solomon, depicted as a Roman magistrate, sitting on a magistrate's chair of office (*sella curulis*) on a podium and flanked by two lower magistrates. The three men seem to be wearing white

togas rather than pallia. Solomon holds a sceptre in his right hand. On the extreme right is the façade of a building, with a tent in front of it. In the centre-of the scene is a baby, lying on a round table; on its left stands a soldier, ready to cut the child in two. The two women are dressed in long stolae and draped in pallae; one weeps in front of the podium, while the other shields the baby from the soldier's sword with her body. Two more soldiers stand on the left of the podium. All the soldiers wear bronze cuirasses and Attic helmets, and carry the round Macedonian shield, used by heavy infantry, and a long spear. On the extreme left stands a group of five people, apparently watching the proceedings with terror: there are three men, draped in pallia or togas, and two women, wearing long tunics. All the figures are shown as pygmies, thus making clear that the scene is intended as a parody.

Clearly the painting poses many problems. Is it a Roman copy of an Alexandrian original, or was it painted in Alexandrian style, perhaps by an Alexandrian artist, as a special commission for a Roman citizen?

What does it depict? The subject seems to be the Judgement of Solomon (1 Kings 3: 16–28). The cultivated Greek public would have been familiar with Jewish-Hellenistic literature in Greek; much of this consisted of biblical stories, written by Hellenized Jewish authors such as Demetrius, who wrote a



Jewish history for Ptolemy IV (221–204 BCE), or Eupolemus (second century BCE). Works such as the well-known *Jewish Antiquities* of Josephus show that contemporary Jewish authors had mastered the canons of Greek historical prose. This scene probably does depict the Judgement of Solomon, since a fresco parodying the story of Jonah was found in the same house.

Published: Maulucci, 1988: 108.

References: Bickerman, 1988; Giordano and Kahn,

1979: 56-57.

59 CHRISTIAN NORTH AFRICAN LAMP DEPICTING SOLOMON ENTHRONED

Red slip ware Tunisia, North Africa Fourth century

Length: 13. 8 cm; height: 6.1 cm; width: 8.3 cm

Private collection

The discus of this Christian North African lamp is decorated with the figure of Solomon, seated on a throne. He has curly hair and a long beard; he wears a cloak, fastened on his left shoulder, and a long-sleeved tunic, probably decorated, and oriental trousers (*bracae*). He holds a scroll in his left hand (perhaps a petition from the women), and his open right hand stretches forwards — a typical gesture in Hellenistic-Roman body language, which could be interpreted as encouraging a plaintiff to state his or her case.

Solomon's throne is decorated on each side with a four-petalled rosette, another oriental motif, and stands on a podium. This image of Solomon clearly depicts him as an oriental monarch, as shown in Roman iconography; the only detail missing is the oriental diadem.

The discus is surrounded by an alternating pattern of two concentric circles and chevrons.

Unpublished

References: Barbera and Petriaggi, 1993: 356; 365, no. 47. For circle motif, see: Hayes, 1972: 223, 224.

Kessler, 1979b: 483-484, no. 434.

Tortorella, 1987: 125-126.



60 Mould depicting Solomon on his throne

Gypsum

Tunisia, North Africa

Fourth century

Length: 19.2 cm; width: 21.0 cm;

thickness: 1.8–2.1 cm Private collection

The mould is incised with multiple images of Solomon, seated on a throne. The king and his throne closely resemble those depicted on no. 59.

Unpublished

References: Barbera and Petriaggi, 1993: 369, no. 110. For the palm tree motif, see Hayes, 1972: 225. Kessler, 1979b: 483-484, no. 434. Tortorella, 1987: 128.

61 PLATE FRAGMENT DEPICTING THE SOLDIER AND THE BABY FROM THE JUDGEMENT OF SOLOMON

Red slip ware Tunisia, North Africa Fourth century

Height: 6.2 cm; width: 8.4 cm; thickness: 0.3 cm

Private collection

This plate rim fragment probably depicts the soldier ready to cut the child in Solomon's Judgement in two. He grasps a sword (a Roman gladius) in his right hand, and with his left holds the baby's left forearm. The figure seems to be derived from late antique iconography. Similar soldiers are depicted in the illuminated manuscript of the Iliad Ambrosiana, produced in Alexandria in the second half of the fifth century, and in the Joshua Roll, a scroll containing abridged extracts of the Greek version of the book of Joshua, variously dated to the sixth-seventh centuries or the ninth century; it is probably a reproduction of an Alexandrian Hellenistic original of the fourth to sixth centuries CE. The soldier wears a helmet shaped like a Phrygian cap (generally indicating a Trojan soldier in Hellenistic-Roman iconography); he is dressed in a short military tunic, with a linen or leather corselet.

The baby (actually a small child) lies on his back, naked. As in many other North African red slip ware pieces, this scene could depict more than one subject: besides showing the Judgement of Solomon, it might represent Neoptolemus, the cruel son of Achilles, slaughtering Astyanax, Hector's son.

Unpublished

References: Bell, 1979: 216–217, no. 193; Diringer, 1967: 33–34, 42–43; Kessler, 1979b: 483–484, no. 434.

62 MOULD DEPICTING ONE WOMAN IN THE JUDGEMENT OF SOLOMON

Gypsum Tunisia, North Africa Fourth century

Height: 11.4 cm; width: 11.9 cm;

thickness: 1.3-1.5 cm Private collection

This mould for North African red slip ware is incised with two Old Testament subjects: on the right is one of the two women from the story of the Judgement of Solomon. She is very similar to the figure shown on no. 63. Her right arm is slightly bent forward to block out the scene unfolding opposite her, and her left arm hangs down parallel to her body.

On the left of the mould appears a fragmentary scene of Jonah being thrown to the sea monster. The stern of a Roman *navis honeraria* (merchant vessel), propelled by sail alone, is visible. Similar vessels are depicted on second-third century mosaics from Ostia and on a Roman sarcophagus. Two sailors



are shown on the deck of the ship, dressed in short sleeveless tunics, with only one shoulder covered; they wear the *pileum* hat. Jonah himself is missing. The monster's tail can be seen on the left.

Unpublished

References: Garbsch and Overbeck, 1989: 123, nos. 61-64; 132-133, nos. 78-82; Kessler, 1979b: 483-484, no. 434; Lucchesi-Palli, 1979b: 426, no. 384.

63 DISH FRAGMENT DEPICTING ONE WOMAN IN THE JUDGEMENT OF SOLOMON

Red slip ware

Tunisia, North Africa

Fourth century

Height: 5.4 cm; length: 6.7 cm;

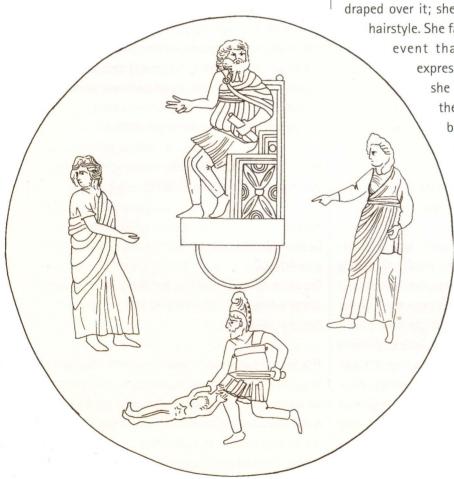
thickness: 0.4-0.6 cm Private collection

This fragment depicts the upper part of one of the two women in Solomon's Judgement (see drawing). She is dressed in the contemporary fashion of the period, in a long tunic with short sleeves and a *palla* draped over it; she has a typical fourth-century hairstyle. She faces right, away from the grim

event that is about to unfold. Her expression of sorrow indicates that she is probably the real mother of the baby. The lower part of her body is missing.

Unpublished

References: Garbsch and Overbeck, 1989: 123, nos. 61-64; Kessler, 1979b: 483-484, no. 434.



SOLOMON THE MAGICIAN

Josephus reports that God enabled Solomon 'to learn that skill which expels demons... he composed such incantations also by which distempers are alleviated: and left behind him the manner of using exorcisms, by which they drive away demons so that they never return, and this method of cure is of great force until this day' (Jewish Antiquities VIII, 2). Josephus also mentions an interesting episode of exorcism that he witnessed in the presence of the Emperor Vespasian and his legions: a Jew by the name of Eleazar placed a ring with a root (perhaps mandrake), mentioned in the books written by Solomon, on the nostrils of a man possessed by a demon; the man collapsed and the demon escaped through his nostrils.

64 EULOGIA TOKEN RING ENGRAVED WITH THE NAME OF SOLOMON

Bronze
Eastern Medi

Eastern Mediterranean

550-600 CE

Diameter: 1.0 cm; thickness of bezel: 0.1 cm.

Private collection

Eulogia tokens were manufactured from the midsixth to the early seventh centuries CE. Generally made at a holy site from local clay, they served as a tangible reminder of the blessing conveyed by the local saint, and many of them bore the inscription ${}^{\prime}\text{E}\nu\lambda\circ\gamma\hat{\iota}\alpha$ (eulogia means 'blessing' in Greek). These tokens depict Christian subjects, such as the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi, the Baptism of Jesus, and the Resurrection. Clay or metal flasks with two small handles (ampullae) were used to hold holy water or oil, bottled at the site, and like the tokens, were sold as souvenirs to pilgrims visiting the shrine.

Two types of eulogia tokens linked with Solomon

are known, according to the archaeologist L. Y. Rahmani:

Variant A, framed by a slightly raised circle, depicts two tubular forms: one stands vertically, and the other is bent into a U shape, at the base of the first form. An inscription in Greek that reads: $\Sigma O\Lambda OMON$, 'Solomon', is generally present.

Variant B, shown here, is slightly smaller, and is also framed by a slightly raised circle. It shows four tubular forms: the three longest are joined in a spray, and the smallest appears between the two uppermost tubes. It too bears an inscription in Greek that reads: $\Sigma O\Lambda OMON$, 'Solomon'. The name is arranged in two vertical columns; on the left: $\Sigma O\Lambda OMON$ and on the right: MON.

This object, however, is not a clay token but a ring with a prophylactic function. According to Rahmani, the tubes represent the roots of the mandrake plant, which, according to Josephus (see above) could heal those possessed by a demon.

Unpublished

References: Rahmani, 1999: 92-104.

65 RING DECORATED WITH A MANDRAKE PLANT

Bronze

Eastern Mediterranean

550-600 CE

Diameter of bezel: 0.9 cm; length: 0.5 cm + 1.4 cm

of band fragment; thickness of bezel: 0.2 cm

Private collection

This bronze ring depicts four tubular forms, the three longest joined in a spray, and the smallest appearing between the two uppermost tubes; as on no. 64, these probably represent the mandrake plant. They are surrounded by an inscription in Armenian: *Mar Sargis*, the name of a cleric or a saint.

Unpublished

SOLOMON THE DEMON SLAYER

As mentioned above, Jewish Hellenistic writers attested Solomon's magic powers. This tradition appeared later on in the Testament of Solomon, an eastern Christian text dating from the third century. It recorded a legend about Solomon that described how the king, during the building of the Temple, realized that one of the workers was possessed by a demon. Solomon prayed to God, and in response, the archangel Michael appeared and gave him a sealring, which enabled him to control the demon's will when he stamped it with the seal. Solomon was thus able to conscript this demon, as well as its henchmen, for the building of the Temple. It is interesting that the demons mentioned in this legend include a shedemon named Obizoth or Abizion, who visits expectant mothers and tries to strangle their newborn babies. Solomon gained control over her by writing one of the mystical names of the archangel Raphael on an amulet. Solomon's magical power to control demons is further attested in a Jewish work from the third-fourth centuries, the Sefer Harazim, the 'Book of Secrets'.

These traditions seem to be represented on contemporary gems that show a lightly-armed horseman, wearing a tunic and a *chlamys* or a *sagum* (cloak), fastened on his right shoulder, and riding boots. He rides a horse with a military saddle, and with a spear grasped in his right hand pierces the heart of an evil female demon, sometimes lying supine under the horse's feet. The rider is commonly identified as Solomon. The name $\Sigma o \lambda o \mu \omega \nu$, 'Solomon', sometimes appears round the horseman, and on the reverse of the gem appear the words $\sigma \phi \rho a \gamma i s \theta e o \delta$, 'seal of God'.

Although these gems and amulets are of Hellenistic-Jewish origin, the iconography is clearly

Hellenistic-Roman. The origin of the horseman must be sought in the late classical-Hellenistic iconography of the king hunting with a spear, dressed in a tunic and a chlamys; the young Alexander is depicted in this way in a wall painting from Philip II's tomb at Vergina. The image appears later on imperial coins depicting the Antonine emperors, such as Antoninus Pius (137-161), Marcus Aurelius (161-180), and Commodus (180-192); here the emperor, draped in a paludamentum, is shown spearing an enemy lying on the ground under the horse's feet. Another possible source is a series of reliefs, found mainly in the Danubian and Balkan provinces of the Roman empire, which depicted a figure known as 'the Thracian god' and a horseman spearing a fallen enemy. Last but not least, some tombstones of cavalrymen in the Roman army dated to the beginning of the third century portray the deceased riding on a horse, without armour, but with a sagum (military cloak) and a spear.

As to the identity of the female demon being trampled, various traditions are known. In late Jewish mystical texts of the eighth-tenth centuries, she is identified as Lilith, a demonic figure mentioned occasionally in the Babylonian Talmud, where she is described as having long hair (*Eruvin* 100b) and wings (*Niddah* 24b), and as a violent demon attacking men sleeping alone (*Shabbat* 151b). A more developed tradition is found in midrashic literature. Here Lilith is described as attacking newborn babies — either those of others or her own (*Bamidbar Rabba* 16: 15). It is interesting to note that the Babylonian shedemon Lamashtu, who attacked newborn babies, was depicted as having long hair.

Jewish magical sources from the sixth-seventh centuries, such as magic bowls and amulets, mention the names of three angels *Snwy*, *Snsnwy*, and *Snygly* or *Smnglf*. The story behind these mysterious names appears in the *Alphabet of Ben Sira*, a midrashic text of the Geonic period, written no later than the end

of the tenth century. Snwy, Snsnwy and Snygly were the three angels sent by God after Lilith, Adam's first wife, the 'first Eve', who fled from Adam because she claimed equality with him. When she was found in the Red Sea, the angels threatened that one hundred of her sons would die every day, if she refused to return — which she did. Although she claimed that she had been created especially to harm newborn babies, she swore that whenever she saw the image of these three angels on an amulet, she would not harm the baby who wore it. This legend explains the custom of protecting women in childbirth from the power of Lilith by affixing amulets over the bed, bearing the names or descriptions of the three angels.

The mysterious names of these three angels may actually be the mystical names given to the three archangels; the story quoted above from the *Testament of Solomon* records that Solomon gained power over a she-demon by making use of one of the mystical names of the archangel Raphael. This late version of the Solomon legend has parallel traditions in Christian literature from the Byzantine period onwards. In these, the she-demon has various different names, and the three angels become three saints: Sines, Sisinnius, and Synodoros.

In Byzantine iconography of the fifth century, the horseman lost his original Jewish character to become St Sisinnius, destroying the evil she-demon Gyllo, the killer of little children. Sisinnius is depicted on bronze amulets as a Byzantine horseman, wearing a lamellar cuirass and a cloak, with a halo around his head. The butt of his spear is decorated with a cross. The most likely bearer of this name who could have served as the model for this legend was a martyr at Antinoe in Egypt, a victim of the persecutions of Diocletian (284–305). On the reverse of these amulets appear the names of three archangels — Gabriel, Michael, and Uriel (perhaps the original names of the three angels/saints) — presumably in

order to strengthen the prophylactic power of the amulet. Sometimes the reverse of the amulets depicts the evil eye, $\pi o \lambda \upsilon \pi a \theta \dot{\eta}_S \dot{o} \phi \theta a \lambda \mu \dot{o}_S$, pierced by sharp weapons or attacked by several fierce or noxious animals. The origin of this evil eye may be found in New Kingdom Egypt (fifteenth century BCE), where the king used to slay it in a temple ritual although most of the sources for this ritual date from the Ptolemaic period (third-second centuries BCE). The motif of the evil eye appears in the *Testament of Solomon*.

The accompanying inscription is generally in Greek or Aramaic. Later on, in the Byzantine East, the horseman trampling the demon monster became St Demetrios, while in the West he turned into St George, killing the dragon.

It is interesting to note that in later kabbalistic texts, Solomon reappears in conjunction with Lilith, who is identified as one of the two harlots who appear in judgement before him, or as the Queen of Sheba. *References:* Seyrig, 1934: 5-9.

66 Magic Gem Depicting Solomon Spearing the Demon Lilith

Haematite

Eastern Roman province of Syria-Palaestina Third century

Height: 2.9 cm; width: 2.3 cm; thickness: 0.4 cm Israel Antiquities Authority, inv. no. 1931.2

This magic gem is one of the prototypes for the long series of depictions of Solomon's seal. On the obverse Solomon appears as a horseman, wearing a diadem on his head. He wears a tunic, with what seems to be a cuirass over it, as the protective leather strips suspended from it (pteruges) can be clearly seen. His chlamys is fastened on his right shoulder, and he wears riding boots. His horse has a military saddle. Solomon grasps a spear in his right hand, and is about to pierce

the heart of an evil female demon — Lilith, who lies trampled under the horse's feet. She has long hair, and the lower part of her body seems exaggerated.

It is interesting to note that this image of Solomon is more Hellenistic than Roman; he resembles Alexander the Great or a Macedonian horseman rather than a Roman emperor. Around the scene runs the Greek inscription:

Cολομων

'Solomon'

On the reverse there is an inscription, engraved in mirror writing, in three lines:

σφραγίς θεοῦ

'seal of God'

Published: Milstein, 1998: 69-70, no. 50.

References: Bonner, 1950: 208-211; pl. XIV, nos. 294-

299; pl. XV, nos. 300-311; pl. XVI, nos. 312-319.

McCown, 1922: 1-24.

67 Magic Gem Depicting Solomon Spearing the Demon Lilith

Dark brown serpentine

Caesarea Maritima (Roman province of Palaestina) Third-fourth centuries

Height: 2.4 cm; width: 1.2 cm; thickness: 0.3 cm Israel Antiquities Authority, inv. no. 1998.7193

This broken gem, of which only the upper part survives, was originally oval. It depicts Solomon riding on a horse, spearing the demon Lilith. He wears a diadem, and a tunic, and grasps a spear in his right hand.

On the obverse is a Greek inscription, perhaps referring to the archangel:

МІХАНА

Μιχαηλ

'Michael'

This invocation to Michael is appropriate, since he is the angel who appeared to Solomon and gave

him the seal-ring that enabled him to control the demon (see above).

Published: Amorai-Stark, 1988: 108, fig. 19.

68 Magic Gem Depicting Solomon Spearing the Demon Lilith

Haematite

Beth She'arim, Eastern Roman province of Syria-Palaestina

Third-fourth centuries

Height: 3.5 cm; width: 2.2 cm; thickness 0.5 cm Israel Antiquities Authority, inv. no. 1985.51

The obverse of the oval gem depicts Solomon, riding a horse and spearing the demon Lilith. He is shown at the top of the scene, wearing a diadem and dressed in a tunic, with a *chlamys* fastened on his right shoulder. In his right hand is a long spear, with which he attacks the long-haired female demon Lilith, shown at the bottom; she shields herself against the spear with both arms. At the top and the bottom of the obverse there is a star.

The combination of a Solomonic magic gem with a reverse depicting a coiled snake is unusual. The coiled snake is probably to be identified with the Chnoubis snake known from healing amulets, in particular for ailments of the stomach, a remedy mentioned by Galen. This snake is a representation of good, marked as divine by the nimbus around its head; it was a composite divinity whose origins have been explained in different ways. An indecipherable Greek inscription surrounds the snake.

Published: Milstein, 1998: 70, no. 49.

References: Bonner, 1950: 208-211; pl. XIV, nos. 294-299; pl. XV, nos. 300-311; pl. XVI, nos. 312-319; for the Chnoubis snake, see 25, 51-60. McCown, 1922: 1-24. Delatte and Derchain, 1964: 54-72. (on Chnoubis gems); 261-264 (on Solomon gems).

69 Amulet with a depiction of Solomon spearing the demon Lilith

Bronze

Eastern Mediterranean

Fourth-fifth centuries

Diameter: 2.1 cm; thickness: 0.2 cm Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem 3278

Gift of the Wolfe family in memory of Rev. Meir and Bertha Fomin and Joseph and Celia Wolfe, Glasgow

The obverse of this small bronze round amulet depicts Solomon spearing Lilith. Solomon wears a *chlamys*, fastened on the right shoulder, and holds a spear in his right hand. He seems to be wearing a muscled cuirass with *pteruges* (protective leather strips intended to protect the groin). He tramples upon Lilith, depicted as a woman with long hair, lying on her back.

Around the border of the amulet runs a Greek inscription:

ΕΙΣ ΘΕΟΣ Ο ΝΙΚΩΝ ΤΑ ΚΑΚΑ

Έις Θεός ὁ νικών τὰ κακά

'The One God who overcomes evil'

The upper part of the reverse bears an inscription in Greek:

ΙΑΩ ΣΑΒΑΩΘ ΜΙΧΑΗΛ ΓΑΒΡΙΗΛ ΡΑΦΑΗΛ Ιαω Σαβαωθ Μιχαηλ Γαβριηλ Ραφαηλ 'God of Sabaoth ("Lord of Hosts"), Michael, Gabriel, Raphael'

Below the inscription is a splendid lion, shown in profile with its head facing right.

Unpublished

70 SAMARITAN AMULET DEPICTING SOLOMON SPEARING THE DEMON LILITH

Bronze

Givat Katznelson, eastern Nahariya (Roman province of Palaestina)

Fifth-sixth centuries

Height: 4 cm, width: 2 cm

Israel Antiquities Authority, inv. no. 1966.1686

This bronze amulet is rectangular, with rounded corners and a suspension loop. The incised obverse depicts Solomon riding on a horse, spearing the demon Lilith. The iconography is Byzantine, as Solomon is shown with a halo around his head. Over the head of the figure is an inscription in Greek:

ΕΙΣ ΘΕΟΣ Ο ΝΙΚΩΝ ΤΑ ΚΑΚΑ

Έῖς Θεὸς ὁ νικῶν τὰ κακά

'The One God who overcomes evil'

The reverse has been effaced. The amulet was found during the excavations of Givat Katznelson, at Nahariya, in a Samaritan tomb, along with another amulet with a Samaritan inscription.

Published: Reich, 1986: 393.

71 Amulet depicting Solomon Spearing the demon Lilith

Bronze

Eastern Roman Empire

Fifth-sixth centuries

Height with suspension hole: 6.5 cm; width: 2.7 cm;

thickness: 0.1 cm

Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem, 3277

Gift of the Wolfe family in memory of Rev. Meir and Bertha Fomin and Joseph and Celia Wolfe, Glasgow

This bronze amulet is rectangular, with rounded corners and a suspension loop. The bronze pendants

with the rider seem to be derived from the Solomon gems and may also be related. The obverse probably depicts Solomon as a heavily-armed Byzantine rider, wearing a lamellar cuirass and a cloak, with a halo around his head. He is spearing the demon Lilith, who is being trampled by the horse.

Above the figure is an inscription in Greek:

ΕΙΣ ΘΕΟΣ Ο ΝΙΚΩΝ ΤΑ ΚΑΚΑ

Έις Θεός ὁ νικῶν τὰ κακά

'The One God who overcomes evil'

The reverse bears a magic formula in Greek:

ΦΑΥΟΒΡΙΣ

ΑΥΟΒΡΙΣ

ΥΟΒΡΙΣ

ΟΒΡΙΣ

 $BPI\Sigma$

IΣ

Σ

φαυοβρις

'Fauobris'

This formula is called by magicians a *pterygoma*, that is in the form of a wing, made by repeating the first line, dropping the initial letter at each repetition, until the final letter remains at the lowest point of the pattern. It was used against the bite of a reptile. *Unpublished*

References: Bonner, 1950: 88.

72 AMULET DEPICTING SOLOMON SPEARING THE DEMON LILITH

Bronze

Eastern Roman Empire

Fifth-sixth centuries

Height with suspension hole: 5.4 cm; width: 2.7 cm;

thickness: 0.1 cm

Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem, 3273

Gift of the Wolfe family in memory of Rev. Meir and Bertha Fomin and Joseph and Celia Wolfe, Glasgow The obverse depicts Solomon and Lilith as in no. 71. Surrounding Solomon is the same Greek inscription: $EI\Sigma \Theta EO\Sigma O NIK\Omega N TA KAKA$

Έις Θεός ὁ νικῶν τὰ κακά

'The One God who overcomes evil'

The upper part of the reverse bears an inscription in Greek:

IAΩ ΣΑΒΑΩΘ ΜΙΧΑΗΛ ΓΑΒΡΙΗΛ ΟΥΡΙΗΛ Iαω Σαβαωθ Μιχαηλ Γαβριηλ Ουριηλ 'God of Sabaoth ['Lord of Hosts'], Michael, Gabriel, Uriel'

Below the inscription is the evil eye, attacked from left to right by a lion, a stork, a snake, a scorpion, and another lion.

Unpublished

73 AMULET DEPICTING SOLOMON SPEARING THE DEMON LILITH

Bronze

Eastern Roman Empire

Fifth-sixth centuries

Height with suspension hole: 5.1 cm; width: 2.5 cm;

thickness: 0.1 cm

Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem, 3274

Gift of the Wolfe family in memory of Rev. Meir and Bertha Fomin and Joseph and Celia Wolfe, Glasgow

The amulet resembles nos. 71 and 72 in both text and image. The only exceptions are: on the obverse below Lilith appears a lion, shown in profile and on the reverse, the Greek inscription differs:

ΙΑΩ ΣΑΒΑΩΘ ΜΙΧΑΗΛ ΒΟΗΘΙ

' Ιαω Σαβαωθ Μιχαηλ βοηθ(ε)ι

'God of Sabaoth ['Lord of Hosts'], Michael helps'
Unpublished

References: Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 60-61, no. 180.

74 AMULET WITH A DEPICTION OF ST SISINNIUS (?) SPEARING A FEMALE DEMON, AND WITH THE BEGINNING OF PSALM 91

Bronze
Provenance unknown
Sixth-seventh centuries
Height: 5.9 cm
Collection Christian Schmidt, Munich, inv. no. 645

This round amulet, framed by a circle, is said to represent Saint Sisinnius on the basis of iconographical and chronological criteria. He is shown riding on a horse, in the guise of a Byzantine horseman with a halo around his head; the spear in his right hand terminates in a cross. The horse is trampling an evil demon, probably Gyllo.

Outside the circular frame runs an inscription in

Greek, quoting the beginning of Psalm 90 according to the numbering in the Septuagint (Psalm 91 in the Hebrew text):

Ο ΚΑΤΥΚΟΝ ΕΝ ΒΟΗΘΕΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΥΨΙΣΤΟΥ 'Ο κατοικῶν ἐν βοηθεία τοῦ ὑψίστου 'He who dwells in the secret place (note that the Greek text has ΒΟΗΘΕΙΑ 'Help') of the Most High'

On the reverse is depicted the Ascension of Jesus; he is shown enthroned within a mandorla, an almond-shaped frame, raising his right hand in blessing, with a halo around his head. The mandorla is carried by two heraldic winged angels, wearing long gowns, with haloes around their heads. They are probably personifications of the Moon and the Sun, since a crescent appears above the left-hand angel and an X, perhaps representing the sun, above the right-hand angel. The schematic figures below may symbolize tormented souls in hell, looking to Jesus for their salvation.

Published: Zalhaas, 1998: 211-212, no. 309.





75 AMULET OF ST SISINNIUS SPEARING THE DEMON AND PSALM 91

Bronze

Eastern Mediterranean

Sixth-seventh centuries

Length with suspension loop: 4.6 cm; width: 2.4 cm;

thickness: 0.2 cm, 0.9 cm (hole)

Private collection

The obverse of the drop-shaped amulet depicts a mounted rider, a destroyer of evil who may be St Sisinnius, with a halo around his head, spearing a demon depicted as a stylized snake.

The reverse bears a Greek inscription, quoting the beginning of Psalm 90 according to the numbering in the Septuagint (Psalm 91 in the Hebrew text):

O. K. / ATY. / KON

'Ο κατοικών...

'He who dwells'

Unpublished

References: Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 62-63, no. 192.

76 AMULET WITH MAGICAL THEMES

Bronze

Eastern Roman Empire

Sixth-seventh centuries

Diameter: 5.6 cm; thickness: 0.1 cm

Private collection

This amulet resembles no. 74, although the saint is shown killing a lion. To the right of Sisinnius is a winged angel, shown in profile, with a halo around his head and wearing a long gown. To the left and in the field under the legs of the horse is a misbegotten Greek text:

ΕΙΣ Θ(ΕΟ)Σ Ο ΝΙΚΩΝ ΤΟΝ ΩΟ ΝΕΡΩΟΝ

'Εῖς Θεὸς ὁ νικῶν τόν ωο νερων 'The One God who overcomes ...'

Outside the circular frame runs the beginning of Psalm 90 according to the Septuagint (Psalm 91 in the Hebrew text):

Ο ΚΑΤΎΚΟΝ ΕΝ ΒΟΗΘΕΊΑ ΤΟΥ ΥΨΊΣΤΟΥ ΕΝ ΣΚΕΠΗ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΎ ΤΟΥ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΎ ΑΥΛΙΣΘΉΣΕΤΑΙ. ΕΡΕΊ ΤΩ ΚΎΡΙΩ...

'Ο κατοικών ἐν βοηθεία τοῦ ὑψίστου ἐν σκέπη τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ αὐλισθήσεται. Ἐρεῖ τῷ Κυρίω

'He who dwells in the secret place of the most High, shall abide in the shelter of the Almighty (Shaddai), I say of the Lord, my refuge and stronghold ...'

The reverse is composed of multiple images and inscriptions. Preceding from the top to the bottom, we see first the Ascension of Jesus; he is shown enthroned within a mandorla, raising his right hand in blessing. In contrast to no. 74, the two heraldic winged angels seem to appear from behind the mandorla. Below runs a Greek quote of Isaiah 6: 3: $A\Gamma IO\Sigma \ A\Gamma IO\Sigma \ A\Gamma IO\Sigma \ KC \ CABA\Omega\Theta$

"Αγιος "Αγιος "Αγιος, Κύριος Σαβαοθ 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the God of Sabaoth'

Below the inscription appear large esoteric symbols, a few of which are indecipherable characters, and below them is a lion, shown in profile. Outside the circular frame runs a Greek inscription: $\Sigma\Phi PA\Gamma I\Sigma \ \ThetaO \ ZONTO\Sigma \ \Phi\Upsilon AA\XiON \ A\PiO \ \PiANTO\Sigma \ KAKO\Upsilon \ TON \ \PhiEPO\Upsilon NTA \ TO \ \Phi\Upsilon AKTHPION \ TO\Upsilon...$

Σφραγὶς Θ(εο)υ ζοντος φύλαξον ἀπὸ παντὸς κακοῦ τὸν φεροῦντα τὸ φυλακήριον τοῦτο 'May this seal of the Living God protect the wearer

of this amulet from all evils'

Unpublished

References: Bonner, 1950, 307, no. 324; pl. XVII, no. 324.

JONAH

ET EGO DIXI ABIECTUS SUM A CONSPECTU OCULORUM TUORUM ... CIRCUMDEDERUNT ME AQUAE USQUE AD ANIMAM ABYSSUS VALLAVIT ME PELAGUS OPERUIT CAPUT MEUM AD EXTREMA MONTIUM DESCENDI TERRAE VECTES CONCLUSERUNT ME IN AETERNUM ET SUBLEVABIS DE CORRUPTIONE VITAM MEAM DOMINE DEUS ME. (IONA 2: 5-7)

I thought I was driven away, out of your sight ... The waters closed in over me, the deep engulfed me. Weeds twined around my head. I sank to the base of the mountains; the bars of the earth closed upon me forever. Yet you brought my life up from the pit, 0 Lord my God! (Jonah 2: 5-7)

profile on the right. Two eagles with outspread wings, that on the left pecking at a cluster of grapes, frame the scene. The figures are shown in crude outline.

Daniel in the lions' den also appears on the mosaic floors of the synagogues of Na'aran (sixth century) and Susiya (sixth century). According to the historian Steven Fine, the depiction of Daniel praying, facing the Torah Ark and Jerusalem, underlines the importance of prayer (i.e. the *Shema* and *Amidah* prayers) in contemporary synagogue liturgy, which for the rest consisted of *piyutim* (hymns). Daniel's pose may also reflect the prayer posture of Jews in late antiquity. If so, does this imply that both Jews and Christians prayed in the same way, since Daniel is usually shown as an orant in both Jewish and Christian art of the third to sixth centuries?

Published: Ma'oz, 1981: 112.

References: Fine, 1996: 38; Gutman, Yeivin, and Netzer, 1981: 126; Hachlili, 1996: 99, 119-120;

Shinan, 1996: 135.

94 Console with Daniel in the Lions' den

Wood Bawit (?), Egypt Sixth-seventh centuries Height: 96 cm; length: 41 cm Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Spätantike und Byzantinische Kunst, inv. no. 3019

This wooden console beam (lintel bracket) depicts Daniel in the lions' den. Daniel stands in the centre, in Eastern dress, including a Phrygian cap, a cloak fastened on the right shoulder, a vertically-pleated decorated tunic which probably had long sleeves, and trousers ornamented with a guilloche motif. Daniel has curly hair and bare feet. The use of wood and the decoration add a Coptic touch to this scene. Flanking Daniel are two small, crouching lions. The

lions' heads are missing.

The scene is framed by a composition with a strong architectural flavour, although it is composed of floral motifs. The palm trees on each side are depicted as Corinthian columns, with bases and capitals. Only the upper part clearly represents the palm leaves in a naturalistic way. Daniel's head is framed by a conch decoration, part of which is missing. On either side of the palm trees are door jambs, decorated with a double meander decoration framing four-petalled rosettes.

This architectural composition is very similar to contemporary Coptic tombstones. Other features, such as the overlarge head and the treatment of floral motifs, are also typical of Late Byzantine Christian reliefs in Coptic Egypt.

Published: Effenberger and Severin, 1992: 182–183, no. 96.



The book of Jonah records the story of Jonah son of Amittai, ordered by God to preach to the inhabitants of Nineveh, capital of the Assyrian empire. His story has come to be seen by Christians as a prefiguration of the life, entombment and resurrection of Jesus. The Gospel of Matthew makes this comparison explicit: 'For as Jonah remained in the belly of the sea-monster for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights' (Matt. 12: 40). The Jonah story was the biblical tale most frequently depicted in early Christian art. It is found in a three-, four- or fivepart cycle: Jonah cast overboard, swallowed, disgorged, under the gourd vine, and meditating among the rocks. The iconography of Jonah lying under the gourd vine is clearly derived from the Hellenistic-Roman depiction of the god Dionysus sleeping under a vine.

The 'whale' in the story is actually a large fish, according to the Hebrew text; in the Greek translation it is referred to as a *ketos*, a word applied to whales, dolphins and various sea monsters. The *ketos* is depicted according to the classical iconography of a sea-creature, with a long dog-like muzzle (or occasionally a more boar-like head), long ears, a crest, a lion's forelegs, a fishy body and a long writhing tail (Boardman, 1987: 73ff).

77 SARCOPHAGUS LID DEPICTING THE JONAH CYCLE

Marble

Probably Rome, Italy

330-340

Height: 20 cm; length: 149 cm; thickness: 35 cm

Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem 4296

Undulating waves of water underlie the upper part of the lid. Above the waterline, there are three divisions, with a Greek inscription with a christogram in a panel flanked by two scenes. On the left, Jonah is being cast overboard by two sailors, to be swallowed by the fish; another sailor stands on their left. Jonah is depicted as a nude youth with curly hair. The sea monster (*ketos*) faces Jonah. This *ketos* has no paws or fins. On the right, the two other components of the cycle, Jonah cast up, and Jonah under the gourd vine, are combined in one scene: Jonah is resting, naked, under a vine trellis, faced by a sea monster with a distinctive curly mane shown halfway down his body.

The Greek inscription reads: ΓΛΥΚΩΝΙ ΔΟCHN ZHCHC

Γλυκωνι δοσην ζησης

'To Glycon who was given life(?)'

A Latin inscription, flanked by two christograms, on



95 CHURCH RELIEF DEPICTING DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN AND THE PROPHET HABAKKUK

Limestone
Egypt
Sixth-seventh centuries
Height: 24 cm; length: 55.5 cm
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für
Spätantike und Byzantinische Kunst, inv. no. 6141

This depiction differs from other depictions of Daniel in the lions' den, since it shows an episode during the seven days which Daniel spent there, when the prophet Habakkuk brought him bread to sustain him. This episode does not appear in the original text in the Hebrew Bible, but was one of several other episodes connected to the Daniel cycle, such as Susanna and the Elders, and Bel and the Dragon. It

appears in the Greek Septuagint (Daniel 14: 33).

Daniel, depicted as an orant, stands on the right. He is dressed as a Eastern dignitary, with a Phrygian cap. He wears a decorated tunic with long sleeves, a cloak fastened on his breast by a brooch, and long trousers. His head is damaged and his arms are bent at the elbow, with the palms facing up. Flanking Daniel are two small lions, shown in profile. Daniel and the lions are framed in the upper part of the scene by an archway composed of bricks, indicating the edge of the pit.

To the left of Daniel is the prophet Habakkuk, with curly hair; he wears a decorated and belted tunic, without trousers, and carries a basket full of bread in his right hand. Habakkuk's garments reflect Late Roman dress. The left part of the relief is slightly damaged. It may have depicted the angel that carried the prophet from Judaea to Babylon.

Published: Effenberger and Severin, 1992: 178, no. 93.



96 CHRISTIAN NORTH AFRICAN BOWL DEPICTING DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Red slip ware Tunisia, North Africa Fourth century Diameter: 18.5 cm

Römisch-Germanisches Museum, Cologne,

RGM KL 546

As is common in the Christian North African ceramic repertoire, Daniel is depicted naked, with long hair and a beard; his arms are extended and his hands shown frontally. The upper part of his body emerges from a *kantharos*, a Greek vessel (usually made of stone, and decorated in relief during the Hellenistic and Roman periods). Daniel is flanked by two lions, shown in profile.

Daniel's posture, with outspread arms, resembles that of Jesus on the cross, serving to emphasize his role as forerunner of Jesus and prototype of the Christian martyr. In other representations on North African pottery, Daniel is generally depicted as an orant, with his arms bent at the elbow, palms up.

Daniel, the *kantharos* and the lions follow the canons of Hellenistic-Roman iconography: Daniel is shown naked (and uncircumcised), with a beard; his muscles are carefully delineated, as in representations of Greek gods and heroes. Perhaps this image of Daniel originated in the depiction of the Titan Prometheus, chained to the rocks of the Caucasus, and tortured by Zeus' eagle, who tore out his liver afresh every day. Another source for Daniel's iconography is the scene of a man sentenced *ad bestias*, 'to the beasts' — tied to a pole before being eaten by lions or other beasts in the arena, the fate of both common criminals and Christians during the early Roman Empire.

Around the border and in the centre of the bowl

runs a pattern of two incised lines.

Published: Garbsch and Overbeck, 1989: 128, no. 71. References: Hayes, 1972: 217, no 47; Saguí and Tortorici, 1987: 172, no. 107.

97 POLYCANDELON DEPICTING DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Bronze

Eastern Mediterranean, Syria

Fifth-sixth centuries

Diameter: 41.5 cm; height: 53 cm

Collection Christian Schmidt, Munich, inv. no. 343

The polycandelon was the ancestor of the chandelier. It generally consists of a large pierced round plate,





cast in bronze, hanging from a smaller bronze disc, which was suspended on chains from the vault or ceiling of a church.

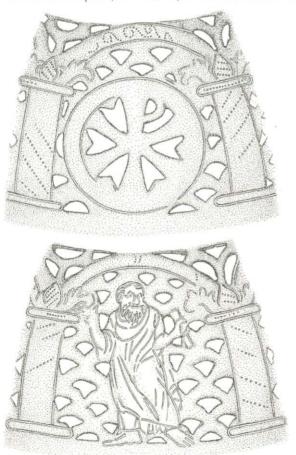
This polycandelon has a round plate, with six circular holes, hanging by three chains from an metal hemisphere, crowned by a knob for suspending the polycandelon from the ceiling.

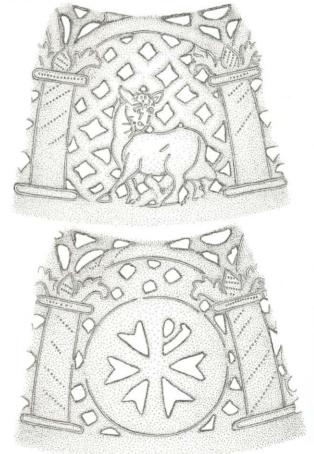
The entire hemisphere is decorated in openwork. Six frames, consisting of arcades with two flanking Corinthian columns and a central curved gable, surround the hemisphere. Two of the frames contain christograms, inscribed in a circle; one bears the *Agnus Dei*, the lamb of God (John 1: 36), seen in profile with its head turned backwards. Two other frames surround two unidentified figures, dressed in long gowns and *pallia*; both are bearded and barefoot. One extends his right arm forwards, slightly bent with open hand, as if about to speak; the second, who holds a scroll in

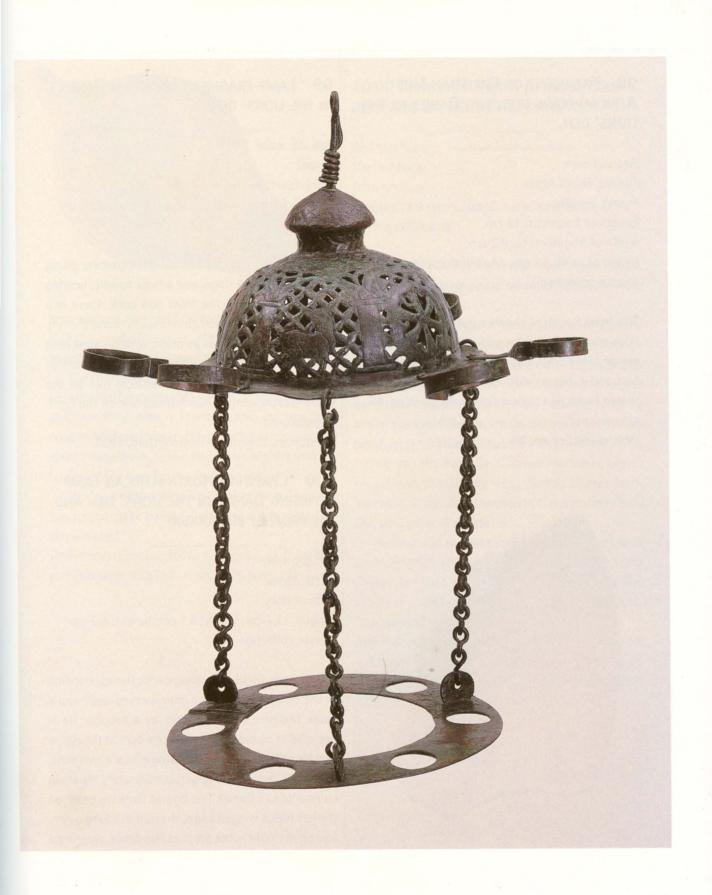
his left hand, may be bald. It is not certain whom they represent, but one possibility is that they are the apostles Peter and Paul (usually shown bald), who were both martyred; this is supported by the figure in the sixth frame — Daniel in the lions' den, who was also thought of as a forerunner of the Christian martyrs. As usual, he is dressed in oriental attire, with a Phrygian cap, a long-sleeved tunic, trousers, and a cloak fastened on the breast by a brooch. He is depicted as an orant, with his arms bent at the elbow and his palms facing upwards, and is flanked by two crouching lions. There are other examples of early Christian iconography which juxtapose Daniel, Peter and Paul, such as a bronze casket from Intercisa in Pannonia (modern Hungary).

Published: Elbern, 1998.

References: Dinkler-von Shubert, 1979: 429-430, no. 387.







98 FRAGMENT OF CHRISTIAN NORTH AFRICAN BOWL DEPICTING DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Red slip ware

Tunisia, North Africa

Fourth century

Length of fragment: 13 cm; width of fragment: ca. 8.2 cm;

height of bowl: 3.5 cm; original diameter: ca. 18 cm

Private collection

This bowl fragment shows a pattern of two incised lines around the border and one incised line in the centre of the bowl. Daniel is shown naked, with long hair and a beard, with extended arms and palms shown frontally, inside a *kantharos*, as in no. 96.

Unpublished

References: See no. 96.



99 LAMP FRAGMENT DEPICTING DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Red slip ware

Levant

Third-fourth centuries

Length: 5.6 cm; width: 5.3 cm; thickness: 2.4 cm

Private collection

This lamp has a rounded rim, a slightly concave discus framed by a thick ridge, and a thick handle, bearing four grooves down the front and back. There is a row of stamped dot and circle motifs round the rim.

Daniel is depicted as an orant, with his arms bent at the elbow and his palms facing up. A lion in heraldic posture can be seen flanking him on the left. Probably another lion flanked him on the right. *Unpublished*

References: Rosenthal-Heginbottom, 1996.

100 CHRISTIAN NORTH AFRICAN LAMP DEPICTING DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN AND THE PROPHET HABAKKUK

Red slip ware

North Africa

Fifth century

Length: 13.7 cm; width: 8.1 cm; height: 5.2 cm

Private collection

The concave discus is decorated with Daniel, standing in the centre, dressed in a long-sleeved tunic and a cloak fastened on the breast by a brooch. He is depicted as an orant, with his arms bent at the elbow and his palms facing up. Flanking him are two lions, in profile, which are disproportionately small in comparison to Daniel. Two figures flank his head: on the left flies a winged angel, dressed in a long gown, and on the right is the prophet Habakkuk, wearing a



long-sleeved tunic and carrying a flat round loaf in his right hand. This scene reflects the story of Daniel as recorded in the Septuagint (see no. 95).

The channel around the discus is decorated with an alternating pattern of circles, double-bordered and inscribed with a lozenge, and squares, also double-bordered and inscribed with a circle. The two small filling-holes in the discus cut slightly into the bodies of the two figures flanking Daniel.

The base of the lamp has a raised ring. The lamp has a solid spike handle, flattened at the sides. Unpublished

References: Ennabli, 1976: 45, no. 32, pl. I; Barbera and Petriaggi, 1993: 357, no. 2, 361, no. 28.

101 CHRISTIAN NORTH AFRICAN LAMP DEPICTING DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Red slip ware North Africa Fifth century

Length: 13.9 cm; width: 8.1 cm; height: 5.9 cm

Private collection

In contrast to no. 100 which was made in one mould, this lamp had a plain discus on which appliqués were affixed.

The oblong discus is decorated with Daniel, standing in the centre, dressed in a belted long-sleeved tunic. A dagger or some other object seems to be fastened to the left side of the belt, which is decorated with dots, but this has been obscured by one of the two filling holes. Daniel is depicted as an orant, with his arms bent at the elbow and his palms facing up. His head is disproportionately big in comparison to his body. He is flanked by two lions, in profile, which are very small in comparison to him, and very naive in character.

The channel around the discus is decorated with an alternating pattern of concentric lozenges and circles. The base of the lamp has a raised ring. The lamp has a solid spike handle, flattened at the sides. *Unpublished*

References: Barbera and Petriaggi, 1993: 356, no. 1; Ennabli, 1976: 45, no. 32, pl. l. For circle motif, see: Hayes, 1972: 223, 224-225; Tortorella, 1987: 125, 126.

102 COPTIC LAMP DEPICTING DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Fired clay

Egypt

Fourth-fifth centuries

Length: 10.4 cm; width: 13.3 cm; height: 2.9-3.2 cm

Private collection

A moulded rectangular lamp with rounded corners. The lamp has seven wick holes, covered with a thick layer of soot, and a short handle, bearing a central groove. The lamp shows traces of a reddish-brown colour, typical of a type of clay imported to Alexandria.

The central part of the lamp is decorated with Daniel in the lions' den; he is flanked by two lions, and is shown as an orant with his arms bent at the elbow and his palms facing up. The scene is framed by indented dots; larger circular indentations decorate Daniel's body. The two lions and Daniel are depicted very naively. Each lion has a filling-hole directly above it. On the back of the lamp, two palm branches are framed by a *tabula ansata*.

Unpublished

References: Cohen-Mushlin, 1979: 384-385, no. 352.



103 NORTH AFRICAN LAMP MOULD DEPICTING DANIEL

Gypsum

Carthage, North Africa

Fifth-sixth centuries

Length: 20.2 cm; width: 14.5 cm; thickness: 4.7 cm Collection Christian Schmidt, Munich, inv. no. 1414

A gypsum mould for a red slip ware oil lamp resembling no. 100.

Unpublished

104 AMULET PLAQUE DEPICTING DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Lead

Roman province of Palaestina Secunda (Galilee)

Sixth century

Height: 1.5 cm; width: 1.7 cm

Private collection

The obverse of the rectangular, almost square, lead plaque depicts Daniel in the lions' den, surrounded by a ridged frame. Daniel is shown naked except for a Phrygian cap. His arms are raised and extended in the orant posture. The muscles are clearly depicted, and the Hellenistic-Roman origin of the iconography is evident. Daniel is flanked by two lions: that on the left has a mane and is clearly male, while that on the right has no mane, and must be a female. A cross appears above each of Daniel's hands.

On the reverse is a triple frame: the outer frame consists of a ridge, the central frame of a line of dots, and the inner one of a thin line. Within the frame is a Greek inscription in three lines:

ΦΥΛΑΚ ΤΟΝΑΓ

ΑΘΟΝ

Φυλακ τον αγαθον 'Guard the good'

The inscription emphasizes the apotropaic function of the amulet.

Unpublished

References: Bonner, 1950: 222.





105 PLAQUE DEPICTING THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC AND DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Lead

Eastern Mediterranean (Palaestina?)

Sixth century

Length: 3.1 cm; width: 2.2 cm

Private collection

A rectangular lead plaque, damaged at the top left corner and on the base, depicts two scenes from the Bible: on the obverse, the Sacrifice of Isaac (as on no. 31, which bears identical motifs), and on the reverse, Daniel in the lions' den (Dan. 6: 16–24).

On the reverse, Daniel raises his hands in the orant posture. He is dressed like an Eastern dignitary, with possibly a Phrygian cap on his curly hair, a medallion around his neck, an ornate tunic, trousers, and a cloak which covers his shoulders. His head is surrounded by a halo. He is flanked by two lions, standing and facing him. Only the last two letters of the Greek inscription, 'Daniel', can be read:

 $(\Delta ANI)H\Lambda$ $(\Delta \alpha \nu \iota) \in \lambda$ Daniel

For the possible owner, see no. 31. *Unpublished References:* Bonner, 1950: 222; pl. XVIII, nos. 332, 343; Finney, 1995.

106 Pendant with Image of Daniel

Bloodstone (green and red mottled jasper) Eastern Roman Empire Late third or fourth century

Length: 26.0 mm; width: 4.5 mm; height: 4.3 mm

Private collection

On this unusual pendant Daniel is shown naked, following the standard representation of athletes in the Hellenistic-Roman world. His arms follow the contours of his body, his head constitutes an eighth of his height, and his physical features, particularly his muscles, are emphasized. He stands between two lions, which rear towards the outer edges of the gem.

This gem poses more questions than answers. Two different iconographic motifs from the classical world are combined here: two heraldic lions, and an athlete. Together, they represent Daniel. Who was the wearer of this gem? Why did he or she choose this strange combination of classical iconography and biblical significance? The stone is unusually large and is mounted in a silver collar to be worn as a pendant (enkolpion), although the suspension loop is missing. Unpublished

107 GLASS PENDANT WITH DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

White-blue glass Eastern Mediterranean Fourth-fifth centuries Length: 2.2 cm; diameter: 1.6 cm

Private collection

This round white-blue glass medallion has a double frame, with a thick outer ridge and an inner line, and a suspension loop. The medallion depicts Daniel in the lions' den; he wears a Phrygian cap and a tunic, and raises his arms in the orant posture, flanked by two small lions.

Unpublished

References: Eisen and Kouchakji, 1927: pl. 131.

108 GLASS PENDANT WITH DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Blue glass
Eastern Mediterranean
Fourth-fifth centuries
Length: 2.1 cm; diameter: 1.5 cm
Private collection

This round blue glass medallion is framed by a thick ridge and has a suspension loop. Daniel wears a Phrygian cap and a long gown, and raises his arms in the orant posture, flanked by two small lions. Two dots on either side of Daniel's head may represent the angel (left), and the prophet Habakkuk (right; Dan. 14: 33–39 [Septuagint]).

Unpublished

References: Eisen and Kouchakji, 1927: pl. 131.



109 GLASS PENDANT WITH DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Dark blue-black glass Eastern Mediterranean Fourth-fifth centuries

Length: 2.2 cm; diameter: 1.6 cm

Private collection

This round dark blue-black glass medallion is framed by a thick ridge and has a suspension loop. The scene resembles that on no. 108.

Unpublished

References: Eisen and Kouchakji, 1927: pl. 131.

110 Fragment of Glass Pendant With Daniel in the Lions' den

Glass

Eastern Mediterranean Fourth-fifth centuries Diameter: 1.6 cm

Private collection

This round glass pendant is framed by a small ridge. The relief decoration has some incrustation. Daniel is depicted almost naked, with a cloak on his shoulder and a Phrygian cap, raising his arms in the orant posture, and flanked by two small lions.

Unpublished

References: Eisen and Kouchakji, 1927: pl. 131.

111 STAMP SEAL DEPICTING DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Jasper

Sassanian period

Third-seventh centuries

Height of seal: 1.8 cm; length of stamp: 2.2 cm; width

of stamp: 2.4 cm Private collection

The black jasper seal is shaped as a hemisphere, with a hole through the axis for suspension.

The flat side shows Daniel in the lions' den. He is bearded and bare-headed, except for a fillet. He wears a long pleated kilt, following contemporary Eastern fashion, and is flanked by two lions. His body is shown frontally and his head in right profile. His hands are raised and open, in the orant posture. A cross is marked on each lion.

The origin of the image of Daniel in the lions' den on Sassanian seals is thought to go back to the Mesopotamian motif of the Master of the Beasts, whose iconography continued in Persian art in the Achaemenid period; however, unlike this figure, Daniel is never shown touching or holding the animals. Similar contemporary Sassanian seals depict the human figure stabbing the rampant beast with a long spear.

Unpublished.

References: Lerner, 1977: 22-26, pl. VI.

112 BULLA DEPICTING DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Lead
Eastern Mediterranean
Fourth-seventh centuries
Diameter: 2.0 cm
Private collection

This round bulla is framed by a ridge. The bulla is very worn, perhaps from prolonged use, and the image is difficult to discern. Daniel raises his arms in the orant posture, flanked by two small lions. *Unpublished*

References: Zacos and Veglery, 1972: 1673, nos. 2960, 2961.

113 BULLA DEPICTING DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Lead
Eastern Mediterranean
Fourth-fifth centuries
Diameter: 1.7 cm
Private collection

This round lead bulla is framed by a thick ridge. Daniel is dressed in a long-sleeved tunic and



trousers, with a Phrygian cap, raising his arms in the orant posture and flanked by two small lions. The lion on the left has a mane, thus showing he is male; on the right side, however, the lion has no mane, and must be a female.

Unpublished

References: Zacos and Veglery, 1972: 1673, nos. 2960, 2961.

114 Bulla depicting Daniel in the Lions' den

Lead
Eastern Mediterranean
Sixth-seventh centuries
Diameter: 1.9 cm
Private collection



This round bulla is framed by a wreath. Daniel has a halo around his head, wears a long gown and a cloak fastened on the breast, and raises his arms in the orant posture; he is flanked by two small lions. Two crosses on either side of Daniel may represent an angel (left) and the prophet Habakkuk (right).

Unpublished

References: Zacos and Veglery, 1972: 1673, nos. 2960, 2961.

115 RING DEPICTING DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Bronze

Provenance unknown Fourth-sixth centuries

Height: 0.9 cm; width: 1.1 cm

Private collection

A bronze oval ring bezel, depicting Daniel as an orant, dressed in a long kilt, raising his arms, and flanked by two lions.

Unpublished

116 RING DEPICTING DANIEL PRAYING

Bronze

Asia Minor

Fifth-seventh centuries

Diameter: 2.2 cm (ring); height: 1.2 cm;

length: 1.3 cm (bezel)
Private collection

A bronze ring with a round bezel depicting a youth, perhaps Daniel, with raised arms, in the posture of an orant. His head is very crude; he wears a tunic, trousers, and a cloak on his shoulders. Two sprigs at the lower edges of the bezel, flanking the figure,



may represent vegetation or tongues of fire. A glass medallion at the Vatican Library depicts similar figures flanked by tongues of fire; they are identified as either Hananiah, Mishael or Azariah.

Unpublished

References: Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 89-93.

Morey, 1959: 31, nos. 147, 148

117 Amulet depicting Daniel in the Lions' den

Limonite

Levant

Fifth-sixth centuries

Length: 2.9 cm; width: 2.1 cm; thickness: 0.5 cm

Private collection

An oval amulet with a suspension loop at the top. On the obverse Daniel is shown as an orant with raised hands, dressed in a long gown, with a halo around his head. Two bushes or tongues of fire are depicted on either side of Daniel. The scene is framed with a rope border.

The reverse consists of a partly preserved inscription in three registers, with undecipherable characters.

Unpublished

References: Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 80-81, no. 300q.

ST MENAS AND HIS ICONOGRAPHY

Menas was a Roman soldier, of Coptic stock, who served in the army of Diocletian (284–305). According to legend, he was executed for his Christian beliefs during the great persecution under Diocletian in 295 CE. After his death he acquired a reputation for miraculous healing powers, which soon spread beyond the borders of Egypt, making him one of the most popular Christian saints in late antiquity, together with St Simeon Stylites of Syria. His shrine stands at Maryiut, some forty miles south-west of Alexandria, on the alleged site of his grave. The church complex was erected in the fifth and sixth centuries, and included a huge pilgrimage church and a baptistery. An entire city grew up around the church.

An example of the objects that were sold to pilgrims visiting the church was the so-called Menas ampulla, which contained oil or water collected on the spot, serving as a tangible blessing from the miracle-working saint. These clay ampullae were produced from the fifth to the seventh centuries. They bear depictions of St Menas, showing him frontally, dressed as a Late Roman soldier, with a sagum (cloak), a long-sleeved tunic, and cavalryman's boots. His hands are raised in the orant posture. Sometimes he has a halo around his head. Flanking Menas are two animals, generally camels, that emphasize his Coptic origin; it is not certain why camels were chosen.

The iconography of this saint is very similar to that of Daniel in the lions' den, with its orant posture and two flanking animals. Both these figures are linked to martyrdom: for Jews, Daniel in the lions' den symbolized readiness to die for the faith (kidush hashem) from the Maccabean period onwards. The scene was later adopted by the early Christians, and together with the image of the three Hebrews in

the furnace (Dan. 3), it came to symbolize the Christian martyrs, slaughtered in the Roman arena. Menas was one of the last martyrs, dying during the Diocletian persecution.

References: Ševčenko, 1979a-e: 573-574, no. 512; 575-576, no. 514; 576, no. 515; 576-577, no. 516; 578, no. 517.

118 Ampulla depicting St Menas between camels

Terracotta

Egypt (?)

Seventh century

Height: 9.2 cm; width, including handles: 6.4 cm;

depth: 2.5 cm

Israel Antiquities Authority, inv. no. P-192

The sides of the ampulla were made separately in a mould and then joined. The handles and the neck were added by hand. Both sides of the ampulla have the same decoration, with the figure of Menas appearing within a simple circular frame.

The saint is dressed in a short-sleeved tunic. He stands in the posture of an orant, with raised hands, and is flanked by two crouched camels; two crosses, almost completely erased, are depicted on either side of his head.

The circular frame, the identical image repeated on both sides of the object, and the absence of any inscription place the object in the late group of ampullae, dated to the reign of Heraclius (610–641 CE), some years before the Ummayad conquest of Alexandria and Egypt.

Unpublished

References:

Curčić and St. Clair, 1986: 119, no. 145.

Ševčenko, 1979c: 576, no. 515.

Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 56-57, no. 162.

119 Fragment of ampulla depicting St Menas between camels

Terracotta

Egypt

Sixth-seventh centuries

Diameter: 12 cm

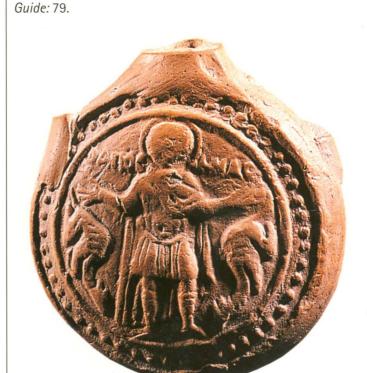
Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum

(Flagellatio)

The fragment consists of one of the two sides of the ampulla. It bears a composite circular frame that consists of an outer and an inner ridge, with a dotted pattern between them. The depiction of Menas is unusual. He is depicted as a 'fighting soldier', more like a Homeric hero than a contemporary Late Roman soldier. For similar depictions in the Iliad Ambrosiana and the Codex Vaticanus Vergilius, see no. 61. Menas wears a muscled cuirass with *pteruges*, a *chlamys* or a *sagum*(cloak), and military boots. He stands in the orant posture, with raised hands, and is flanked by two crouching camels.

On each side of Menas' head is the inscription: (EYΛΟΓΙΑ) ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΜΕΝΑ (Ευλογια) του Αγιου Μενα Blessing of Saint Menas

Published: Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum



THE THREE HEBREWS

Companions of Daniel, fostered at the royal court of Nebuchadnezzar, the three Hebrew boys Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were renamed Shadrach. Meshach and Abed-Nego by the Babylonian vizier in charge of them. The three refused to worship the golden statue erected by Nebuchadnezzar, and as a punishment were bound and cast into a fiery furnace, from which they miraculously emerged alive (Daniel 3). Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the greatness of their God, and thus the 'Three Children' became a paradigm of faithfulness to God (cf. 1 Macc. 2: 59). They set an example for the early Christians, who refused to participate in the imperial cult or to bow to its images. The imperial image played a major role in the persecution of early Christians right up to the Constantinian legitimation of Christianity in the early fourth century. Various written sources describe how, before Constantine, the Roman government forced Christians to worship the image of the emperor on pain of death. In particular, testimonies record the government's use of the image in judicial proceedings in courtrooms to enforce loyalty to Caesar from people who were suspected of being Christians.

120 Fragment of Sarcophagus Lid Depicting Noah and the Three Hebrews before Nebuchadnezzar

Marble
Italy
First quarter of fourth century
Length: 102 cm; height: 30 cm
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für
Spätantike und Byzantinische Kunst, Berlin,
inv. no. 4688

The main scene depicts the Three Hebrews facing Nebuchadnezzar. The king is depicted on the left of the scene, sitting on a sella curulis, the chair traditionally used in the Roman Republic by the consuls, the supreme magistrates, and during the Empire, by the emperor himself. The other symbol of power that emphasizes Nebuchadnezzar's position is the cushion or footstool under his feet (this attribute of the Roman emperor appears in Bereshit Rabba 1: 15, Babylonian Talmud, Hagigah 12a, and Isaiah 66: 1, symbolizing the earth). Except for these attributes and a spear, Nebuchadnezzar is simply dressed in a long-sleeved tunic. He is depicted beardless, like contemporary Roman emperors. He points with his right hand towards the 'idol' opposite him, and grasps a lance in his left hand. The 'idol', to which the Three Hebrews refuse to bend, is shown



as a bearded herm — a standard bust-length statue, here probably depicting the god Hermes; however, the genitalia - the main characteristic of the classical herm — do not appear. The three Hebrew youths awaiting their fate are depicted in 'oriental' dress (like Daniel), with Phrygian caps, chlamys, longsleeved tunics, and trousers (bracae). The first gazes at his two friends, while the other two are watching the king. The pallium-draped figure to the right of the Three Hebrews has been identified as the angel who visited them in the fiery furnace, according to the apocryphal addition (Daniel 3: 49; The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men, II. 26-27). The only other figure is a winged putto, holding the tabula, where the deceased's name was generally written (though this example is blank).

On the extreme left is Noah, dressed in a tunic, sending away the dove with his right hand (Gen. 8: 10–11). Only his torso is visible. Noah stands inside the ark (*kibotos*), shown as a rectangular structure, borne on the waves of the sea. The scene is framed on the right by an olive tree.

The fragmentary lid is framed by a ridged line. A

second fragment of this sarcophagus was found in Rome (it is now in the Museo delle Terme). It depicts another *putto*, on the other side of the inscription, and two scenes from Jonah's life: Jonah being thrown into the sea, and resting under the gourd vine. *Published:* Effenberger and Severin, 1992: 85, no. 12. Deichmann, Bovini and Brandenburg, 1967: 333–334, pl. 128, no. 797.

References: Finney, 1994: 69-98.

121 Fragment of a sarcophagus lid depicting the Three Hebrews before Nebuchadnezzar

Marble

Rome, Italy

First half of fourth century

Height: 23.5 cm; length: 40 cm; thickness: 4 cm Département des Antiquités Grecques, Etrusques et Romaines, Musée du Louvre, Paris, MA 2984

This fragment depicts one of the Three Hebrews facing the idol and Nebuchadnezzar. On the left is a



soldier, dressed in a long-sleeved tunic and a sagum (cloak), fastened on the left shoulder, and armed with a round shield and a spear; he might be a member of the imperial bodyquard, the auxilia palatina. The soldier is guarding Nebuchadnezzar, who sits on a sella curulis. His head is damaged, but his diadem and beard are still visible: he is dressed in a longsleeved tunic. He points to the object in front of him with his right hand, and grasps a sceptre in his left. Once again, Nebuchadnezzar is depicted as a late Roman emperor. Facing him is a columnar pedestal, surmounted by an imperial bust. The image of the emperor portrayed here is bearded, and may be an emperor-philosopher of the second century. Facing Nebuchadnezzar, on the other side of the column, is one of the Three Hebrews, with his arm bent towards the statue; only the legs of one of his companions have survived, to the right. The Hebrew youth wears the usual conventional oriental garb: a Phrygian cap, a chlamys, a long-sleeved tunic, and trousers (bracae). Published: Baratte and Metzinger, 1985: 319, no. 215. References: Finney, 1994: 69-98 and fig 4.1.

122 FRAGMENT OF SARCOPHAGUS LID DEPICTING THE THREE HEBREWS IN THE FIERY FURNACE

Marble

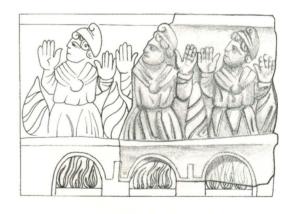
Cuicul (Cherchel), Tunisia, North Africa 300-350 CE

Height: 36 cm; length: 137 cm; thickness: 7 cm Département des Antiquités Grecques, Etrusques et Romaines, Musée du Louvre, Paris, MA 3008 Only parts of the scenes on this sarcophagus lid have been preserved. The Three Hebrews in the Fiery Furnace are depicted on the left of the *tabula*. The entire scene can be reconstructed on the basis of another sarcophagus lid in the Louvre (see drawing). The furnace is shown as a triple arcaded structure in brick; the Three Hebrews, of whom only two survived undamaged, have curly hair and wear Phrygian caps, *chlamys*, and long-sleeved tunics; they are shown in the orant posture, with raised hands. Only their heads and torsos are visible, as the legs are hidden by the furnace.

The central part of the lid is decorated with two curly-haired, winged *putti*, both naked; they hold a uninscribed *tabula* between them.

The right part of the lid depicts two winged *putti*, similar to those holding the *tabula*. However, this pair held up a pleated piece of drapery, which once bore the portrait of the deceased. Only part of their right arms and hands, which originally grasped the drapery, have survived.

Published: Baratte and Metzinger, 1985: 318f., no. 214.





123 CHRISTIAN NORTH AFRICAN LAMP DEPICTING THE THREE HEBREWS BEFORE NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Red slip ware Tunisia, North Africa Fifth century

Length: 15.0 cm; width: 8.9 cm; height: 6.0 cm

Private collection

This crude lamp can be dated to the fifth or sixth century on the basis of iconographic and stylistic features, such as the naively depicted figures. On the round discus, the Three Hebrews are depicted on the right. All have haloes, and wear long-sleeved tunics. For some reason, they do not wear Phrygian caps. To their left is depicted a Corinthian column, on which stands the idol. On the extreme left is Nebuchadnezzar, sitting on a throne and pointing with his right hand at the idol.

The channel around the discus is decorated with a pattern of alternating concentric circles and concentric lozenges, decorated at the corners with



The lamp has a raised ring base and a solid spike handle, flattened at the sides.

Unpublished

References: Barbera and Petriaggi, 1993: 356, no. 1; 360, no. 21; 392, no. 502; Ennabli, 1976: 45, nos. 27, 30; pl. I; Garbsch and Overbeck, 1989: 125–126, no. 65; Hayes, 1972: 223–225; Tortorella, 1987: 125–126; Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 38–39, no. 80.

124 CHRISTIAN NORTH AFRICAN LAMP MOULD WITH THE THREE HEBREWS BEFORE NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Gypsum

Tunisia, North Africa

Fourth century

Length: 20.2 cm; width: 14.5 cm; thickness: 4.7 cm Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum (Flagellatio)

A gypsum mould for a red slip ware oil lamp resembling no. 123.

Unpublished

References: Barbera and Petriaggi, 1993: 392, no. 502; Ennabli, 1976: 45, nos. 27, 30; pl. I; Garbsch and Overbeck, 1989: 125–126, no. 65; Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 38–39, no. 80.

125 CHRISTIAN NORTH AFRICAN LAMP DECORATED WITH THE THREE HEBREWS IN THE FIERY FURNACE

Red slip ware Tunisia, North Africa Fifth century

Length: 14.0 cm; width: 8.4 cm; height: 5.0 cm

Private collection

This crude lamp can be dated to the fifth or sixth century on the basis of iconographic and stylistic

features, such as the naively depicted figures.

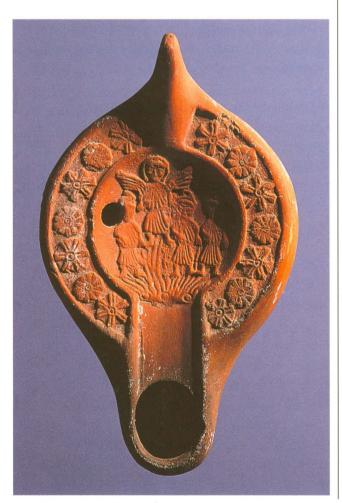
The Fiery Furnace is depicted as a fierce fire, with the flames licking around the bodies of the Three Hebrews, who wear long-sleeved tunics, with Phrygian caps. Above them hovers an angel, with a halo round his head and wings on his shoulders. The two small filling-holes in the discus cut slightly into the heads of the two outer Hebrews.

The channel around the discus is decorated with an alternating pattern of six- and twelve-petalled rosettes.

The lamp has a raised ring base and a solid spike handle, flattened at the sides.

Unpublished

References: Barbera and Petriaggi, 1993: 367, no.



101; 369, no. 108; Ennabli, 1976: 44, no. 25; pl. I; Hayes, 1972: 223; Saguí and Tortorici, 1987: 174; Tortorella, 1987: 129-130.

126 CHRISTIAN NORTH AFRICAN PLATE FRAGMENT DEPICTING THE THREE HEBREWS IN THE FIERY FURNACE

Red slip ware Tunisia, North Africa Fourth century

Width: 7.8 cm; height: 6.0 cm

Private collection

The scene is dramatic: the flames part to reveal the Three Hebrews, depicted as naked, curly-haired children, holding each other's hands. The depiction of the Three Hebrews as *putti* demonstrates the debt to Hellenistic-Roman iconography.

Unpublished

References: Garbsch and Overbeck, 1989: 126-127, nos. 67-69.

127 CHRISTIAN NORTH AFRICAN PLATE FRAGMENT DEPICTING THE THREE HEBREWS IN THE FIERY FURNACE

Red slip ware Tunisia, North Africa Fourth century

Height: 7.6 cm; width: 7.1 cm

Private collection

This fragment depicts the same scene as no. 126. The furnace, missing on the other fragment, is shown as a rectangular brick structure, with flames spurting from the top. The Three Hebrews are only partly visible above the furnace's rim. A solitary bearded figure, perhaps representing Nebuchadnezzar, stands outside the Fiery Furnace. He wears a long-sleeved

tunic, and his head turns backwards in the direction of the furnace.

Unpublished

References: Garbsch and Overbeck, 1989: 126-127, nos. 67-69.

128 CHRISTIAN NORTH AFRICAN PLATE FRAGMENT DEPICTING THE THREE HEBREWS LEAVING THE FIERY FURNACE

Red slip ware Tunisia, North Africa Fourth century

Length: 11.1 cm; width: 9.6 cm; thickness: 2 cm

Private collection

The fragment bears a pattern of two incised lines running around the border and two incised lines in the centre of the plate, which has a wide ring base.

Although the Three Hebrews are often shown facing Nebuchadnezzar or standing in the fiery furnace, they are rarely shown emerging unscathed from the fire, though another example of this scene appears on a bowl in the Mainz Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum. On both bowls, the fiery furnace is depicted as a pottery oven, a conical brick building, with one of the Hebrews walking away from its opening. The iconography of the Hebrew is interesting: he is depicted as a *putto*, completely naked, with his arms bent forwards, and with flames



replacing the usual wings. The two other Hebrews, however, are shown as naked adolescents (see drawing). In both examples, the debt to Hellenistic-Roman iconography is evident. On the Mainz bowl the Three Hebrews are accompanied by the scene of Joseph being pursued by Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39: 7–12); see nos. 38, 39. According to the art historian Gary Vikan, there is a thematic parallelism here, reflected in the text of 'Joseph's Testament' from *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (2: 2): 'I struggled against a shameless woman, urging me to transgress with her; but the God of Israel my father delivered me from the burning flame.'

Unpublished

References: Vikan, 1979b: 464-465, no. 415; Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 105-106, no. 408.

129 MOULD FRAGMENT WITH THE HEBREWS LEAVING THE FURNACE

Gypsum

Tunisia, North Africa

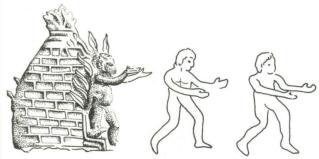
Fourth century

Height, 6.5 cm; width: 6.2 cm; thickness: 1.3-1.5 cm

Private collection

Part of a gypsum mould used to produce the kind of appliqué seen on the previous plate fragment. Unpublished

References: Vikan, 1979a: 463-464, no. 414; Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 105-106, no. 408.



ET CLAMABANT ALTER AD ALTERUM ET DICEBANT SANCTUS SANCTUS SANCTUS DOMINUS EXERCITUUM PLENA EST OMNIS TERRA GLORIA EIUS. (ISAIAS 6: 3)

BIBLICAL QUOTATIONS



Καὶ ἐκέκραγον ἕτερος πρὸς τὸν ἔτερον καὶ ἔλεγον ἅγιος ἄγιος ἄγιος ἄγιος ἄγιος ἄγιος πλήρης πᾶσα ἡ γῆ τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ. (ΗΣΑΙΑΣ 6: 3)

וְקָרָא זֶה אֶל־זֶה וְאָמֵר קְרוֹשׁ קְרוֹשׁ קְרוֹשׁ ה׳ יְבָרָא זֶה מֶלֹא כָל־הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹרוֹ: (ישעיה ו 3) צְבָאוֹת מְלֹא כָל־הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹרוֹ: (ישעיה ו

And one would call to the other: 'Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord of Hosts, His presence fills the whole earth'. (Isaiah 6: 3)

130 BEAKER FOR EUCHARISTIC SERVICE

Silver with niello and gilding
Eastern Mediterranean
Fifth-sixth centuries
Height: 10 cm; diameter: 9.5 cm
Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem 916

The silver beaker is cylindrical, with a short foot. The object is decorated with two horizontal inscriptions, one below the rim, and the other above the base; they are inlaid in black niello and framed by three gilded horizontal bands.

This Greek text is derived from Isaiah 6: 3: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, His glory fills the whole earth'. In the Eastern Orthodox Church this verse forms part of the *Trishagios Hymnos* sung during the daily ritual, while in the Catholic Church it survives as the refrain for the liturgy of the Veneration of the Cross on Good Friday. The text appears on several liturgical objects of the early Eastern Church.

The lower inscription is in Latin, citing Psalm 69:2 according to the Vulgate (Psalm 70: 2 in the Hebrew Bible):

DEVSINADIVTORIVMMEVMINTENDEDOMIN ADADIVBANDVMMEFCS

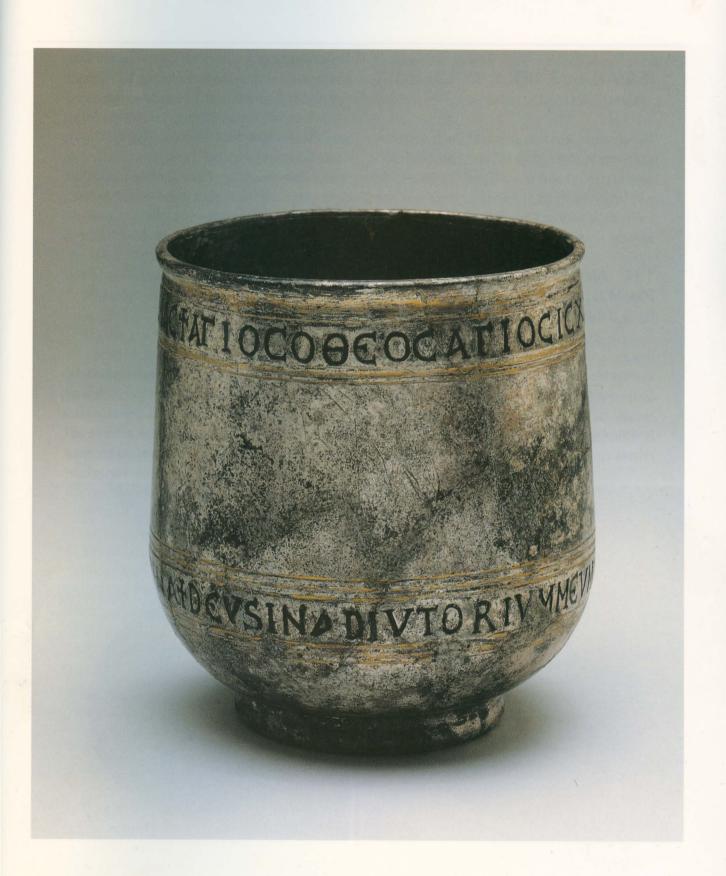
Deus in adiutorium meum intende domin(e) Ad adiubandum me f(a)c(e)s 'O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, (hasten) to help me:

It is still used in the Catholic church as the introductory invocation for the canonical 'hours' (the nine daily services, still celebrated in monasteries).

No comparable pieces are known. Inscriptions appear in similar positions on the oval silver pyxis from Cathedral of Grado, in Italy, while the slightly conical shape is reminiscent of a silver chalice in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore.

Published: Brenk, 1981b: 305, no. 281;

Clamer, 1987b: no. 151.



ISAIAH 6: 3 HOLY, HOLY, HOLY "αγιος, "αγιος, "αγιος

This verse had long formed part of the Jewish liturgy (in which it is known as the *Kedushah*, 'Sanctification') and was adopted by Christians as well (cf. Rev. 4: 8). Its liturgical use helps to account for its popularity on Christian liturgical vessels and magical amulets.

131 Amulet with the beginning of Psalm 91 on the obverse and Isaiah 6: 3 on the reverse

Bronze

Eastern Mediterranean

Sixth-seventh centuries

Height: 5.2 cm; width: 4.8 cm; thickness: 0.1 cm;

length of chain: 41.0 cm

Private collection



The amulet medallion is almost round. An inscription runs around both sides. Both the obverse and the reverse are divided into upper and lower registers.

On the obverse, the upper register shows a haloed Sisinnius, riding a horse and spearing the demon Gyllo. To his right is a winged angel, shown in profile, with a halo around his head and wearing a long gown. Near Sisinnius' cloak there is a completely erased Greek inscription; on the basis of the inscriptions on other amulets (nos. 69-73), it may very likely have read:

EΙΣ ΘΕΟΣ Ο ΝΙΚΩΝ ΤΑ ΚΑΚΑ `Εῖς Θεὀς ὁ νικῶν τὰ κακά 'The One God overcomes evil'

The lower register depicts the three Magi (for the story of the Magi, see no. 3) in profile, advancing from right to left, wearing cloaks and Phrygian caps, and bringing their gifts; their arms extend forwards to the Virgin Mary, who appears on the extreme left, dressed in a *stola* and with a halo around her head.



Outside the rope frame is an inscription in Greek, quoting the beginning of Psalm 90 according to the Septuagint (Psalm 91 in the Hebrew Bible):

Ο ΚΑΤΎΚΟΝ ΕΝ ΒΟΗΘΕΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΥΨΙΣΤΟΥ ΕΝ ΣΚΕΠΗ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΥ ΑΥΛΙΣΘΗΣΕΤΑΙ. ΕΡΕΙ ΤΩ ΚΥΡΙΩ...

'Ο κατοικών ἐν βοηθεία τοῦ ὑψίστου ἐν σκέπη τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ αὐλισθήσεται. Ἐρεῖ τῷ Κυρίω

'He who dwells in the secret place (Greek: 'help') of the most High, shall abide in the shelter of the Almighty (Shaddai), I say of the Lord, my refuge and stronghold ...'

On the reverse, the upper register portrays the Ascension of Jesus. He is shown within a mandorla (an almond-shaped nimbus surrounding the entire figure), raising his right hand in blessing, with a halo around his head. The mandorla is carried by two heraldic angels, with wings and haloes, and wearing long gowns. The lower register depicts Jesus and the twelve apostles, all with haloes and dressed in *pallia*. The two registers are divided by a Greek inscription (from Isaiah 6: 3) which continues around the bottom of the lower register:

ΑΓΊΟΣ ΑΓΊΟΣ ΑΓΊΟΣ [KC] CABA $\Omega\Theta$ Αγιος Αγιος Αγιος Κυριος Σαβαοθ 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the God of Sabaoth ["Lord of Hosts"]'

Outside the rope frame runs a Greek inscription: $\Sigma \Phi PA\Gamma I\Sigma \quad \ThetaO \quad ZONTO\Sigma \quad \Phi \Upsilon \Lambda A\Xi ON \quad A\PiO \\ \Pi ANTO\Sigma \quad KAKO\Upsilon \quad TON \quad \Phi EPO\Upsilon NTA \quad TO \\ \Phi \Upsilon \Lambda AKTHPION \quad TO\Upsilon$

Σφραγίς $\Theta(\epsilon 0)$ ῦ ζοντος φύλαξον ἀπὸ παντὸς κακοῦ τὸν φεροῦντα τὸ φυλακήριον τοῦτο 'May this seal of the Living God protect the wearer of this amulet from all evils'

Most of the inscription has been erased, but it can be reconstructed on the basis of a similar

medallion, no. 76, which bears a complete inscription. Unpublished

References: Bonner, 1950: 307, no. 324; pl. XVII, no. 324.

132 AMULET WITH INSCRIPTION INSPIRED BY ISAIAH 6: 3

Bronze

Levant

Fifth-sixth centuries

Length: 4.1 cm; width: 2.2 cm

Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem 3275

Gift of the Wolfe family in memory of Rev. Meir and Bertha Fomin and Joseph and Celia Wolfe, Glasgow, Scotland

An oval bronze amulet with a loop. The inscription is clearly inspired by Isaiah 6: 3. On the obverse the word 'holy' in Greek is repeated as a magic formula, framed by leaves:

ΑΓΙΟΣ ΑΓΙΟΣ ΓΙΟΣ ΙΟΣ ΟΣ Σ

This formula is called by magicians a *pterygoma*, that is in the form of a wing, made by repeating the first line, dropping the initial letter at each repetition, until the final letter remains at the lowest point of the pattern. It was used against the bite of a reptile. On the reverse is the Greek inscription:

ΙΑΩΘ ΣΑΒΑΩ ΑΔΟΝΑΙ ΑΟΥΗ Ιαω θ(εὸς) Σαβαω Αδοναι

α(κ)ουη (?)

'Lord, God of Sabaoth ["Lord of Hosts"], Adonai, who listens (?)'

The animal pictured below the inscription is probably a lion, shown in profile.

Unpublished

References: Bonner, 1950: 304, nos. 310-311.

133A-H EIGHT RINGS BEARING THE INSCRIPTION 'HOLY, HOLY, HOLY' IN GREEK

Bronze

Eastern Mediterranean

Fifth-sixth centuries

a. Diameter of bezel: 0.9 cm; thickness of bezel: 0.1 cm

Private collection

b. Diameter of bezel: 1.1 cm; thickness of bezel: 0.1 cm Private collection

c. Diameter of ring: 1.7 cm; diameter of bezel: 1.0

cm; thickness of bezel: 0.1 cm

Private collection

d. Diameter of ring: 1.7 cm; diameter of bezel: 1.3 cm; thickness of bezel: 0.1 cm

Private collection

e. Diameter of ring: 1.2 cm; diameter of bezel: 0.9

cm; thickness of bezel: 0.1 cm



Private collection

f. Diameter of ring: 2.0 cm; height of bezel: 0.8 cm; width of bezel: 0.8 cm; thickness of bezel: 0.1 cm Private collection

g. Diameter of ring: 1.6 cm; diameter of bezel: 0.9 cm; thickness of ring band: 0.1 cm; thickness of bezel: 0.1 cm

Private collection

h. Height of bezel: 1.3 cm; width of bezel: 1.0 cm;

thickness of bezel: 0.05 cm

Private collection

These bronze rings have round bezels. The same Greek word is repeated thrice:

ΑΓΙΟΣ ΑΓΙΟΣ ΑΓΙΟΣ

Aylos Aylos Aylos 'Holy, Holy, Holy'

The inscription, from Isaiah 6: 3, was intended to protect the wearer of the ring.

Unpublished

References: Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 91, no. 329.

134 RING WITH 'HOLY, HOLY, HOLY' IN GREEK

Bronze

Eastern Mediterranean

Fifth-sixth centuries

Diameter: 2.3 cm; thickness: 0.1 cm

Private collection

The ring bears the Greek inscription: $A\Gamma IO\Sigma \ A\Gamma IO\Sigma \ A\Gamma IO\Sigma \ K\Upsilon PIO\Sigma$ $A\gamma \iota os \ A\gamma \iota os \ A\gamma \iota os \ Ku \rho \iota os$

'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord'

Similar to the above rings, this one also had a prophylactic function.

Unpublished

135 GEM WITH 'HOLY, HOLY, HOLY' IN GREEK

Lapis lazuli

Eastern Roman Empire

Fifth-sixth centuries

Length: 16.1 mm; width: 18.6 mm; height: 3.4 mm

Private collection

Lapis lazuli was used almost exclusively for magical amulets in the late Roman and early Byzantine periods. This oval amulet is a rare example of a magic gem from this period. On the obverse, it bears a five-line Greek inscription:

ΑΓΙΟΣ

ΑΓΙΟΣ

ΑΓΙΟΣ

ΚΥΡΙΟΣΣ

ΑΒΑΩΘ

Αγιος

Aylos

Aylos

Κυριος Σ

αβαωθ

'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord Sabaoth'

Magical symbols appear on the reverse. Unpublished

PSALM 27 (SEPTUAGINT 26)

Quotations from the Psalms that mention light make a fitting decoration for oil lamps, which were used both in the home and in places of worship and burial. Light is the enemy of darkness, both realistically and metaphorically (e.g. Isaiah 5: 20, Matt. 6: 23). It also symbolizes salvation (Psalm 27: 1: 'The Lord is my light and my salvation', Isaiah 9:1: 'The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; those that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them light has blazed forth') and thus, for Christians, Jesus (John 1: 9, 8: 12). God is the eternal light (e.g. Isaiah 60: 20; James 1: 17). The following objects demonstrate how the biblical verse gradually changes from direct quotation to a paraphrase to a verse inspired indirectly by the Bible.

136 BYZANTINE LAMP WITH THE BEGINNING OF PSALM 27: 1

Fired clay

Eastern Roman province of Palaestina

Sixth-eighth centuries

Length: 10.4 cm; width: 6.8 cm; height: 3.6 cm

Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum

(Flagellatio), inv. no. 434

'Candlestick' oil lamp with a decorative central spine connects the nozzle to the filling hole. The nozzle is decorated with three ridges on each side of the central spine, in a floral motif. The handle is missing, and the base is ring-shaped.

There is a Greek inscription on the channel around the filling hole:

ΚCΦΩΤΙCΜΟCΜΟ

Κ(ύριο)ς φωτισμος μο(υ)

'The Lord is my light'

Published: Loffreda, 1989: 121-122.

137 BYZANTINE LAMP WITH THE BEGINNING OF PSALM 27: 1

Fired clay
Eastern Roman province of Palaestina
Sixth-eighth centuries
Length: 10.1 cm; width: 6.8 cm; height: 3.8 cm
Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum
(Flagellatio), inv. no. 1032

The lamp resembles no. 136. The shoulder bears a Greek inscription:

ΚCΦΩΤΙC 🛧 ΟCΜΟΥ

Κ(ύριο)ς φωτισ(μ)ός μου

The Lord is my light'

The inscription is clearly inspired by Psalm 27, with the three crosses indicating its Christian context.

Published: Loffreda, 1994: 598-600.

138 BYZANTINE LAMP WITH THE BEGINNING OF PSALM 27: 1

Fired clay
Eastern Roman province of Palaestina
Sixth-eighth centuries
Length: 9.5 cm; width: 6.5 cm; height: 3.1 cm
Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum
(Flagellatio), inv. no. 1031

This lamp resembles nos. 136 and 137. The shoulder bears a Greek inscription:

- + ΚCΦΩΤΙCΜΟCΜΟΥ
- + Κ(ύριο)ς φωτισμος μου

'The Lord is my light'

The inscription is clearly inspired by Psalm 27: 1, with the cross showing clearly that this lamp came from a Christian context.

Published: Loffreda, 1994: 598.

139 BYZANTINE LAMP WITH GREEK INSCRIPTION BASED ON PSALM 27: 1

Fired clay
Eastern Roman province of Palaestina
Fifth century
Length: 8.6 cm; width: 5.6 cm; height: 3.2 cm
Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum
(Flagellatio), inv. no. 1008

'Candlestick' oil lamp. It is decorated with a palmette bearing three stylized leaves on each side of the central spine, which runs from the mouth to the filling hole; the hole is surrounded by a double ridge. It has a ring base. The shoulder bears a Greek inscription:

ΦΩΣ ZΩH

φως ζωή

'Light is life'

Published: Loffreda, 1992: 313-314.

140 BYZANTINE LAMP WITH GREEK INSCRIPTION BASED ON PSALM 27: 1

Fired clay
Eastern Roman province of Palaestina
Sixth-eighth centuries
Length: 9.1 cm; width: 6.6 cm; height: 2.9 cm
Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum
(Flagellatio), inv. no. 1009

'Candlestick' oil lamp, closely resembling no. 139, though on this example the palmette bears only two leaves. The shoulder bears a Greek inscription: H (PALMETTE) $\Phi\Omega\Sigma$ H (Xpelotós) $\Phi\Omega$ S 'Christ is light'

The archaeologist S. Loffreda has suggested that the palmette between the H may stand for the number eight, the 'secret number', and that $\phi \hat{\omega}_S$ 'light', refers to Christ.

Published: Loffreda, 1992: 314-315.

141 BYZANTINE LAMP WITH GREEK INSCRIPTION

Fired clay
Eastern Roman province of Palaestina
Sixth-eighth centuries
Length: 10.2 cm; width: 6.8 cm; height: 3.6 cm
Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum
(Flagellatio), inv. no. 1033

The inscription is clearly inspired by Psalm 27:1, although 'Jesus', 'Ιησους, replaces 'Lord', Κυριοῦ; this is the only known example of this substitution. The inscription is a good illustration of how the early Christians adopted and used the Hebrew Psalms. *Published:* Loffreda, 1994: 600-601.

PSALM 119 (SEPTUAGINT 118): 105

This verse inspired many interpretations and rereadings.

The Hebrew text reads:

נר לרגלי דברך ואור לנתיבתי

'Your word is a lamp to my feet, a light for my path' In the Septuagint, the verse Psalm 118: 105 reads:

λύχνος τοῖς ποσίν μου ὁ νόμος σου καί φῶς ταῖς τρίβοις μου.

'Your word is a lamp for my feet,

A light on my path'

The Psalms are numbered differently in the Septuagint and the Hebrew Bible, so that Psalm 119 in Hebrew is numbered 118 in the Septuagint. The verse was quoted in several *midrashim* in relation to the light of learning, describing those who learn the Torah as spreading their light far and wide, and comparing them to men who walk in darkness with a candle in their hand, avoiding all the obstacles in their way. They are to be contrasted with the wicked, who walk blindly without knowing what will hit them next (*Shemot Rabba* 36; *Midrash Tehilim* 109; *Pesikta Rabbati* 8).

142 LAMP WITH THE BEGINNING OF PSALM 119 (118): 105

Fired clay
Eastern Roman province of Palaestina
Sixth-eighth centuries
Length: 9.2 cm; width: 6.8 cm; height: 3.3 cm
Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum
(Flagellatio), inv. no. 433

'Candlestick' oil
lamp, typical of
the end of the
Byzantine
period and the
beginning of
the Islamic
period in Palestine.
The period during
which these lamps
were used spans two



centuries. A wide channel connects the nozzle and the discus, and is decorated with a double knotted rope motif. The lamp belongs to the L 19 group. The handle is very small, and there is a base ring.

There is a Greek inscription on the channel around the filling hole:

ΛΥΧΝΟCΤΙCΠΟCΙΝΜΟΥΟΝΟΜΟCΟΥ

Λύχνος τοῖς ποσίν μου ὁ νόμος (σ)ου 'Your law is a lamp to my feet'

This inscription recalls Psalm 119: 105 in the Septuagint version (118: 105). The main difference is the word No μ os, 'law', instead of Λ oyos, 'word'. This variation is, however, known from the Codices Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus (early manuscripts of the Bible).

Published: Loffreda, 1989: 121-122.

PSALM 91 (SEPTUAGINT 90)

This psalm speaks of God's protection of the righteous. It was considered to be effective in warding off danger, and the images that appear in it were used on protective amulets and lamps. It also seems to have been recited as a blessing by travellers in order to receive protection on their journey, and this practice may go back as far as the *olei regel*, the Jewish pilgrims who travelled to Jerusalem for the three great festivals of Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and Tabernacles (Pesah, Shavu'ot and Sukkot).

143 Bracelet with the beginning of Psalm 91

Bronze
Eastern Mediterranean
Fifth-sixth centuries
Diameter: 7.4 cm

Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem 3280

A bronze bracelet with four round medallions attached. The first medallion is engraved with the beginning of Psalm 90 in Greek according to the text of the Septuagint:

Ο ΚΑΤΟΙΚΟΝ ΕΝ ΒΟΗΘΕΙΑ

'Ο κατοικῶν ἐν βοηθεία

'He who dwells... shall abide in the shelter (Greek: 'help') of...



The second medallion depicts the Virgin, seated on the right with the child Jesus on her knees. To the left is a kneeling figure, perhaps one of the three Magi (Matt. 2: 11, for discussion of the Magi, see no. 3). All the figures have haloes around their heads. The third medallion depicts two haloed figures kneeling before a narrow, door-like structure; they are probably the two holy women at the Tomb of Jesus (Matt. 28: 1). The fourth medallion depicts a mounted Sisinnius, with a halo, spearing and trampling the demon Gyllo.

Unpublished

References: Bonner, 1950: 306, pl. XVI, no. 321.

144 CHRISTIAN NORTH AFRICAN LAMP WITH IMAGES OF PSALM 91

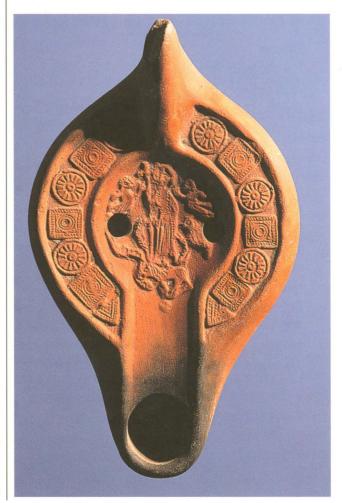
Red slip ware Tunisia, North Africa Fifth century

Length: 14.3 cm; width: 8.5 cm; height: 5.6 cm

Private collection

The round discus is decorated with an image of a bearded and haloed Jesus, wearing a long gown, and spearing a basilisk with a cross-shaped spear, grasped in his right hand; at the same he tramples a lion, a dragon, and an asp. A flying angel appears on either side of his head. This scene reflects in pictures the words of Psalm 91: 10-13: 'No disaster can overtake you, no plague come near your tent; he has given his angels orders about you to guard you wherever you go. They will carry you in their arms in case you trip over a stone. You will walk upon wild beasts and adders, you will trample young lions and snakes.' The verse refers to God's protection, attributed by Christians to Jesus. This image of protection, showing Christ triumphant is a well-known iconographic motif derived from pagan victory scenes, in which the emperor is shown riding on a horse, or on foot,

spearing and trampling his defeated enemy underfoot. This motif was depicted mainly on the reverse of the *antoniniani*, the small silver coins minted at the end of the third century, when Roman emperors were defending the borders of the Empire from the menace of the barbarians. Constantine and succeeding Christian emperors also used this motif, though with a significant innovation: on the reverse of some silver coins from the second quarter of the fourth century the emperor, in military dress, holds the Christian *labarum* (military standard), bearing the *chi-rho*, in his right hand, with a shield in his left. By the fifth century the Christian interpretation of this triumphal theme, substituting Jesus for the emperor, had become very popular. By the sixth



century this image reflected the idea of Jesus' triumph over death, alluding to the Resurrection.

The channel around the discus is decorated with an alternating pattern of spiked circles and squares, each of which is inscribed with a double concentric circle. The lamp's base has a raised ring, and the solid spiked handle is flattened at the sides and chipped at the top.

Unpublished

References: Barbera and Petriaggi, 1993: 357, no. 3, 361, no. 28; Boyd, 1979: 526, no. 471; Ennabli, 1979: 49, pl. II, no. 59; Tortorella, 1987: 125-126; Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 46-47, no. 124.

145 CHRISTIAN NORTH AFRICAN LAMP MOULD

Gypsum Tunisia, North Africa Fifth century CE

Length: 15.3 cm; width: 13.6 cm; thickness: 4.1 cm

Private collection

A North African lamp mould, decorated with Christ trampling the beasts, in a scene closely resembling that on no. 144. The channel around the discus is decorated with an alternating pattern of *chi-rhos* and rosettes inscribed in a circle. The mould is broken at the mouth.

Unpublished

References: Barbera and Petriaggi, 1993: 368, no. 106, 375, no. 210; Boyd, 1979: 526, no. 471; Ennabli, 1979: 49, pl. II, no. 59; Tortorella, 1987: 129-131; Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 46-47, no. 124.

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Unpublished

References: Barbera and Petriaggi, 1993: 357, no. 3, 361, no. 28; Boyd, 1979: 526, no. 471; Ennabli, 1979: 49, pl. II, no. 59; Tortorella, 1987: 125–126; Wolfe and Sternberg, 1989: 46–47, no. 124.

145 CHRISTIAN NORTH AFRICAN LAMP MOULD

Gypsum

Tunisia, North Africa

Fifth century CE

Length: 15.3 cm; width: 13.6 cm; thickness: 4.1 cm

Private collection

A North African lamp mould, decorated with Christ trampling the beasts, in a scene closely resembling that on no. 144. The channel around the discus is decorated with an alternating pattern of *chi-rhos* and rosettes inscribed in a circle. The mould is broken at the mouth.

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LEXICON

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS AND VERSIONS

Apocrypha (lit. 'things that are hidden'): The books not in the Hebrew Bible but found in the Greek Septuagint (with the exception of Esdras II) and included in the Catholic Bible and the canon of the Eastern Orthodox Churches but excluded in the Protestant Bible. These books are chiefly Jewish in origin and were written in the last pre-Christian centuries and the first centuries CE. The fourteen or fifteen books or portions of books that comprise the Apocrypha are: Esdras I, II (IV in the Roman Catholic Bible, in the Septuagint the canonical Ezra-Nehemiah is entitled Esdras II), Tobit, Judith, Additions to Book of Esther, The Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (or Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach), Baruch, Letter to Jeremiah, Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Prayer of Manasseh, Maccabees I and II. The Catholic Church refers to these texts as deutero-canonical (texts later added to the canon), whereas it classifies Esdras I, II and the Prayer of Manasseh as apocryphal.

Pseudoepigrapha (lit. 'falsely attributed'): Jewish writings of the Second Temple period resembling the Apocrypha in general character but not included in any biblical canon and certain Jewish-Christian works of the Early Eastern Church, some written in Hebrew or Aramaic, others in Greek, e.g. the Book of Jubilees as well as the Psalms of Solomon and Maccabees III and IV (considered aprocryphal in the Catholic tradition).

Septuagint (lit. 'seventy'): Greek Bible, so-called because it was supposedly translated by seventy(-two) Jewish sages in Alexandria into Greek for Ptolemy II (285-246 BCE). It first consisted of a

translation of the Pentateuch only, but this rendition marks the first translation of the text of the Hebrew Bible into a foreign language. The designation Septuagint was then extended to the rest of Greek translation of the Bible that followed in the next two centuries. It diverged from the Hebrew in two important respects - it had a different principle of grouping and sequence of the biblical books and it included words which were not accepted into the Hebrew canon (the apocryphal books listed above). During the Roman period, it was widely used by Jews in the Greek Diaspora and was adopted by the early Christians. From the second century CE onwards, Jews in the Greek Diaspora used the translation of the Bible made by Aguila Ponticus, instead of the Septuagint, which the Rabbis disliked. The Septuagint is still used by the Greek Orthodox Church as its official Bible.

Vulgate (lit. 'popular' version): The Latin translation of the Bible made by St Jerome (345-420 CE), the leading bible scholar of the day in the late fourth century to answer the need for a uniform and reliable Latin Bible text on which the Western Church could base its teaching. It became the standard translation of the Bible from which all translations into West European languages were made. It was based on the Hebrew Bible and did not incorporate the extra books of the Septuagint. Evidence of earlier Latin Bible translations are numerous but fragmentary.

RABBINIC SOURCES

Aggadah (Haggadah) (lit. 'narrative'): Rabbinical literature concerned with those portions of the Bible which include narrative, history, ethical maxims and the prophets as opposed to law (Halakhah). It is mainly the creation of Palestinian Jewry, from the time of the Second Temple to the end of the Talmudic period.

Midrash (lit. 'exposition'): A particular genre of rabbinical literature containing interpretations, both hermeneutics and homiletics, of the Hebrew Bible and includes stories, folklore, theology and speculative inquiry. This method of studying scripture is found among Jews for the first time in the Dead Sea sect and it was adopted by the rabbis of the Land of Israel. Early midrashim, of which the oldest is Genesis Rabbah, were edited in Land of Israel in fifth and sixth centuries.

Mishnah (lit. 'repetition'): The corpus of oral law redacted by Judah ha-Nasi in the beginning of the third century C.E. in the Land of Israel. It is divided in six tractates (sedarim) roughly dedicated to agriculture (zeraim), holidays (moed), women (nashim), civil and penal jurisprudence (nezikim), Temple and sacrifices (kedoshim), and purity rules (tehorot). Not all the laws were entered in the Mishnah. Those excluded are called 'baraitot'. Most of the laws excluded from the Mishnah were collected in a corpus parallel to the Mishnah, called Tosefta (lit. 'addition').

Talmud (lit. 'study' or 'learning'): Commonly used to refer to the body of teaching which comprises the commentary and discussions of the rabbis (Gemara, lit. 'completion') on the Mishnah which was pursued in the two centres of Jewish learning: the Land of Israel, mainly in the Galilean academies of Sepphoris and Tiberias, and in southern Mesopotamia in the academies of Sura, Pumbedita and Nahardea in Babylonia. While the latter edition is called the Babylonian Talmud and dated from the third to fifth centuries, the former is entitled the Jerusalem Talmud and was compiled probably during the third and the fourth centuries.

BASIC CONCEPTS OF CHRISTIANITY

Christogram, or *chi-rho*: Refers to the monogram of Christ, a composite of the first two letters of the title *christos*, the *chi* and the *rho*. The Greek Χριστος (*khristos*) 'anointed one' is a translation of Hebrew חשיה (mashiah) 'Messiah', the title given to Jesus of Nazareth, who is believed by Christians to have fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies about the coming of a Messiah.

Ekklesia: A secular Greek term, meaning 'assembly', for example, the assembly of the Athenian demes. In early Christianity, the term ekklesia first denoted a religious community of believers and worshippers and later an ekklesia as a place of worship (and finally a building). Consequently, domus ekklesia refers to the house or home in which the ekklesia, the religious community of believers, met.

Eucharist: The Christian sacrament commemorating the Last Supper in which bread and wine, symbolizing the body and blood of Jesus, are consecrated and consumed.

Gospel: Term for the first four canonical books of the New Testament that record the 'good news' (evangelium, gospel) brought by Jesus. Traditions dating from the second century assigns them to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Orant: Figure in prayer who extends his/her arms, lifting open palms to the heavens. Third century Christian art made the orant one of its favorite subjects but there existed pagan archetypes, orants that were allegories of piety and represented souls in prayer. In both artistic traditions, the

personification of piety soon became the symbolic image of the deceased (to show that he was pious). By the fourth century, the simple Christian is no longer represented as an orant but the iconographic type is reserved for portraits of saints, demonstrating their sanctity and expressing the idea of their intercession with God on behalf of believers.

GLOSSARY OF ARTISTIC TERMS

Ampulla (pl. ampullae): Late Antique globular flask with two handles which was designated by Christians for sacred uses. Such flasks were produced in holy sites and bought by pilgrims visiting them. They contained holy water or oil from the holy site itself. Ampullae were made of clay or metal, and on their sides were depicted in relief the image of the local saint or building. Ampullae were produced from the fifth to the seventh centuries.

Clipeus (imago clipeata): Latin word meaning 'shield'. An artistic term that denotes the bust portrait of the owner of a sarcophagus, inserted in a shield or a conch. The deceased can be depicted alone or with spouse; they are both dressed in ceremonial dress, with male toga, and female palla. Flanking the sides of the imago clipeata are generally winged putti, or victoriae. The iconography is clearly Roman and pagan, but continued in Early Christian art.

Discus: The round central section of the oil lamp, in the middle of which there is the filling hole. Roman imperial lamps (volute lamps and discus lamps) had generally a concave discus, with a very small filling hole, that was decorated with figures in relief. The figures on pagan lamps included various subjects as gods, gladiators, erotic subjects, animals and floral motifs, while on Jewish lamps generally the menorah was depicted. Early Christian iconography appears mainly on North African lamps of the fourth-sixth

centuries that depict various Old and New Testament figures (though figures from pagan myths and Jewish symbols also appear).

Niello: Man-made substance, a composition of sulphur with silver, lead or copper, for filling engraved lines in silver or other metals, usually black in colour.

Parapetasma: Hanging curtain used to close off one space from another. This curtain is usually depicted on sarcophagi as background for portrait figures.

Sella curulis: The magistrate's chair of office. The main characteristic of this chair, is that it could be folded. During the Republic, its use was the prerogative of the Roman consuls, while under the Empire, it was adopted by the emperor. This chair, being movable (unlike a throne), followed the Emperor everywhere, even in campaign, where he sat on it to receive ambassadors or to dispense justice.

Strigilated: Refers to the sickle-shaped decoration named after the strigil, the curved metal tool used by the Greek and Roman sportsmen to scrape off the oil from the body after exercise. This decoration characterized the front of a type of sarcophagus produced in Rome in the third and fourth centuries.

Tabula ansata: Latin term that can be translated as 'tray with handles'. It is a rectangular tablet flanked by 'ears', commonly used for monumental inscriptions.

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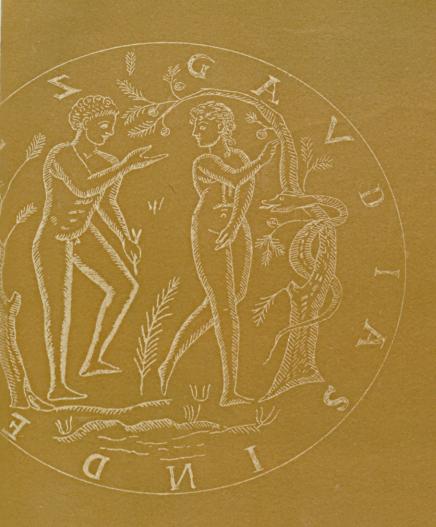
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